NATION

Ram Rahim to face trial for sacrilege, Punjab gives nod

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Investors poorer by ₹9.19 lakh cr in a single day

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

India eye top spot, B'desh face must win game

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 23 OCTOBER 2024 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 19 RABI UL SANI, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 268 | Pages: 8

With 'jaddu ki jhappi', PM urges Putin for peaceful end to war

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a bilateral meeting, in Kazan, Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

KAZAN, 22 OCT

The Russia-Ukraine conflict should be resolved in a peaceful manner and India is ready to provide all possible cooperation towards it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday during his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Modi held bilateral talks with Putin hours after arriving in this central Russian city to attend the 16th BRICS summit.

In his televised opening remarks, Modi conveyed to the Russian leader that New Delhi "fully supports" the early return of peace and stability in the region.

Modi also said that his second visit to Russia in the last three months reflected "close" coordination and "deep trust" between the two countries.

On his part, Putin noted the "good condition" of trade turnover between Russia and India. In his remarks, Modi also referred to his summit talks with the Russian leader in Moscow in July.

Our annual summit resulted in strengthening cooperation in every field, he said.

Modi also congratulated Putin on Russia's successful presidency of BRICS.

"The opening of India's new consulate in Kazan will further strengthen these ties," Modi added. Putin hosted Global South leaders at BRICS summit intended to counterbalance Western clout as China's Xi Jinping, Modi and other global leaders arrived in Kazan for a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies that the Kremlin hopes to turn into a rallying point for defying the Western liberal order.

For Putin, the three-day meeting also offers a powerful way to demonstrate the failure of US-led efforts to isolate Russia over its action in Ukraine. Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov touted the summit as "the largest foreign policy event ever held" by Russia, with 36 countries attending and more than 20 of them represented by heads of state. Modi and Xi Jinping will meet on Wednesday on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 6

PM Narendra Modi on Tuesday met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and emphasised on the need for peace in West Asia at the BRICS summit **PHOTO: PTI**

2 children drown in City's Kengeri Lake

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Two siblings were feared drowned in the Kengeri lake in the city, police said on Tuesday. The children, a boy and a girl were living with their mother in a slum next to the lake and were missing since Monday, police sources said. Police have launched a search operation. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Cyclone Dana to make landfall on East coast

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Odisha and West Bengal are bracing for the impact of Cyclone Dana, which is expected to make landfall between Puri and Sagar Island on the intervening night of 24 and 25 October. 'Dana' is likely to cross north Odisha and West Bengal coasts as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

5 DEAD IN 'LAKE VIEW' B'LURU

Schools shut today, firms advised work from home as rain brings IT capital to its knees

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Five people were killed in rain-related incidents in Bengaluru, which has been reeling under incessant rains for the past three days, bringing several residential areas and roads under knee-deep water.

Five teams of the National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force were deployed to evacuate marooned people with the help of coracles in the country's IT capital on Tuesday.

Amid heavy and incessant rainfall in Bengaluru, the City's Urban Deputy Commissioner Jagadish G announced that schools will be closed on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, North Bengaluru bore the brunt of the rains as several areas were flooded in and around Yelahanka.

According to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, Yelahanka received 157 mm (six inches) rain in just six hours from Tuesday midnight to Tuesday 6 am.

Kendriya Vihar in Yelahanka resembled a river with waist-deep water. The rescue workers rescued people using a coracle.

Due to the waterlogging, normal life was thrown out of gear in Northern Bengaluru. People preferred staying indoors, while many passengers missed their flights, trains and buses. Children were not able to go to schools in areas that were flooded.

Many houses in low-lying areas and near lakes were inundated. Household items, vehicles and electronic goods were damaged. There was severe traffic jam on many important roads. Ballari Road that leads to the Kempegowda International Airport, witnessed chock-a-block for several kilometers. The Tumakuru Road, Old Madras Road and Kanakapura Road too saw severe traffic congestion. Amid Yellow alert, Kar nataka Innovation and Technology Society on Tuesday released an advisory urging IT, BT (Biotech firms) and private companies to allow their employees to work from home on Wednesday. Over 20 flights were late in arriving at the Kempegowda International Airport due to heavy rains, ANI reported quoting airport authorities. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

NDRF personnel rescue residents after floodwaters entered the Kendriya Vihar apartment following heavy rain, in Bengaluru, on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

3 dead after building collapses in City

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Three people were killed while five others are missing after an under-construction building collapsed in Karnataka's Bengaluru on Tuesday, police said.

According to officials, the incident occurred in Horamavu Agara area on Tuesday afternoon. At the time of the collapse, there were over 20 people inside the building. "Fourteen were rescued," D Devaraja, DCP (East) Bengaluru, told ANI.

He further added that a rescue operation was underway to locate the missing people.

According to locals, the incident took place around 1.00 pm.

"Over 20 people were there. Seven of our workers were on site, and one of them has died. The building collapsed due to heavy rainfall. It was a seven-story building. Three others have been injured and hospitalised," said an eyewitness. "We are labourers working here. When we were on a lunch break at around 1.00 pm, we heard a loud sound, and the building started shaking. A man who was working inside the building died on the spot," another eyewitness, Mehfoos, recounted. *—ANI*

A seven-storey under-construction building collapses amid heavy rainfall at Horamavu Agara, in Bengaluru, on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Ballari MP's wife to fight Sandur bypolls: CM

MYSURU, 22 OCT

Congress has decided to give Sandur ticket to Ballari MP E Tukaram's wife Annapurna while candidates for Shiggaon and Channapatna will be decided later, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Tuesday, noting that the party has made all necessary preparations for the November 13 Assembly by-polls in these segments.

To a question on demands to give the Channapatna ticket to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother and former Congress MP from Bangalore Rural DK Suresh, the CM said, "his name is also there, let's see what will be decided."

The last date for filing nominations is 25 October, and the final date for withdrawal of papers is 30 October.

Byppolls for Sandur, Shiggaon, and Channapatna are necessitated, as the seats fell vacant following the election of their respective representatives— E Tukaram of Congress, former CM Basavaraj Bommai of BJP, and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy of JD(S)— to Lok Sabha in May elections.

While BJP has already announced its candidates for Sandur and Shiggaon segments, the party has ceded the high profile Channapatna seat to its alliance partner JD(S), which is yet to announce its candidate. "DK Brothers"— Shivakumar and Suresh— are hoping to regain their lost grounds in the Vokkaliga dominated region, after the Lok Sabha poll debacle in which Suresh lost to BJP-JD(S) joint candidate and Kumaraswamy's brother-in-law Dr CN Manjunath in Bangalore Rural Lok Sabha segment, under which the Channapatna Assembly seat comes. Asked about speculations that BJP leader CP Yogeeshwara, who resigned as MLC on Monday, joining Congress and contesting from Channapatna, Siddaramaiah said, "I haven't spoken to him. Our president (state Congress president Shivakumar) is from Channapatna region, let's see what he decides. I have said the ticket should be given to a suitable candidate. He will discuss and decide." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Annapurna **PHOTO: PTI**

₹600 CR LOSS IN 9 DAYS

50 flights get bomb threats on Tuesday

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI, 22 OCT

Nearly 80 domestic and international flights received bomb threats in less than 24 hours that later turned out to be hoaxes, keeping thousands of passengers and security agencies on tenterhooks.

The estimated losses incurred by airlines due to the disruptions would be around Rs 600 crore, according to two former airline officials.

On Tuesday alone, around 50 flights, including 13 each of IndiGo and Air India received bomb threats. Akasa Air got the threats for over 12 flights and as many as 11 flights of Vistara also received the threats, the sources in the know said.

In nine days, more than 170 flights operated by Indian carriers have received bomb threats, mostly through social media, that also forced the diversion of some of the international flights.

PHOTO: PTI

On average, disruption to a domestic flight would cost around Rs 1.5 crore while the expenses would be around Rs 5-5.5 crore for an international flight, an official, who has worked in the finance department of a domestic airline, told PTI. A back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that the average cost of disruption caused to domestic and international flights would be around Rs 3.5 crore. Meanwhile, the protocols for the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee convened in the event of a bomb threat call to an aircraft or airport, have been tweaked. *—PTI*

All CRPF schools get bomb threat

Just a day after an explosion occurred outside a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) school in Delhi, all such schools across the country received an email on Monday night threatening that they would be bombed on Tuesday, sources said. A police officer said the cyber cell has launched a probe in to the threat mail that came a day after a blast along the boundary of wall of CRPF School in Delhi's Rohini.

SC WARNS UP GOVT AGAINST DEMOLITIONS

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Hearing a challenge to demolition notices served in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich after a communal clash, Supreme Court on Tuesday warned the Yogi Adityanath government against any bulldozer action. The court said it is the state government's "choice" if it wants to risk violating the top court's directions. The court, however, noted that its orders in the 'bulldozer justice' case specify that it will not intervene if the structures facing demolition are illegal.

The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Wednesday a plea filed by three accused in the Bahraich communal violence incident against demolition notices issued by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Senior advocate CU Singh, appearing for the petitioners, mentioned the matter before a bench of Justices B R Gavai and KV Viswanathan seeking urgent hearing. Ram Gopal Mishra, 22, died of gunshot injuries after an inter-faith dispute over loud music being played outside a place of worship in Maharajganj on Sunday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

INDIA HIT HARD

No hockey, cricket in 2026 Commonwealth

LONDON, 22 OCT

In a body blow to India's medal prospects in the Commonwealth Games, key sports such as hockey, badminton, wrestling, cricket and shooting have been dropped from the 2026 edition by host city Glasgow, which unveiled a pruned roster of 10 disciplines to keep the event budget-friendly and free of "operational risks".

Table tennis, squash and triathlon have also been axed in a bid to limit the cost and streamline logistics given that only four venues will host the entire showpiece. The total number of events at the Games will be nine fewer compared to the 2022 Birmingham edition.

"The sports programme will include Athletics and Para Athletics (Track & Field), Swimming and Para Swimming, Artistic Gymnastics, Track Cycling and Para Track Cycling, Netball, Weightlifting and Para Powerlifting, Boxing, Judo, Bowls and Para Bowls, and 3x3 Basketball and 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball," the Commonwealth Games Federation said. The 23rd edition of the Games will take place from 23 July to 2 August, marking Glasgow's return as host after 12 years. The roster is a massive setback to India's medal prospects given that bulk of the country's medals came from the removed disciplines in the past editions. Shooting was never expected to return after being dropped from the Birmingham programme. Glasgow Green, which hosted hockey in 2014, has been dropped from the list of venues. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

Table tennis, squash and triathlon have also been axed **PHOTO: PTI**

Namma 'Venice'

Many places have received 300% excess rain

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Heavy rainfall in Bengaluru on Monday night led to severe waterlogging in various parts of the city. Bellandur Traffic Police said that there was slow moving traffic on outer ring road at Ecospace junction towards Devarabesanahalli to Bellandur junction due to water logging.

JD(S) posted on X, "Ah, just another day in Bengaluru where Congress government's blunders has turned Bengaluru's world-class infrastructure seamlessly into a mini Venice due to the rains." "Welcome to Brand Bengaluru! Where a physically challenged woman falling into a pothole during heavy rains is just another day in paradise. While @siddaramaiah & @DKShivakumarkeep patting themselves on the back for their visionary governance, the City's crumbling infrastructure is doing all the talking. BBMP's mastery in turning roads into death traps is unmatched. Bravo, on setting new standards of neglect and irresponsibility."

BJP leader CT Ravi said, "Earlier, Bengaluru used to have thousands of ponds, who looted all, who earn money through that?... Bengaluru, despite being an international city is in such a condition, who is responsible?"

Survey of the affected areas is being conducted: CM

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Chief Minister Siddaramiah said that the situation of the heavy rain was being monitored and necessary preparations were underway.

Speaking to the media, Siddaramiah said, "We have been monitoring the situation. All necessary preparations are underway. Surveys of the affected areas are also being conducted, and relief measures will be implemented promptly."

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Tuesday inspected the flood-affected areas in Tata Nagar here.

Lashing out at the criticism that he had not visited any flood affected areas, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday said that flood relief works were more important than his visit to those areas. Asked about Opposition leaders' criticism, he said, "I get publicity if I visit flood affected areas, but the need of the hour is relief works and not publicity."

"I was also stuck in the rains on Monday evening. On our way back from Challakere to Bengaluru, we were stranded in 2 feet water near Nelamangala. Chowdeshwari Nagar has received 150 mm of rains.

Many places have received 300 per cent excess rains. Officials have submitted a report regarding this. We have asked many residents to evacuate their homes due to flooding. Five SDRF and NDRF teams have been deployed," he said. *—ANI/ Salar News*

Citizens stranded as water enters homes

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Residents of the Kendirya Vihar apartment complex in Yelahanka were evacuated with the help of boats after rainwater entered the apartment complex.

The heavy rain in the city has caused severe waterlogging causing problems for the residents.

An NDRF official said that information was received that 2,000 to 3,000 people were stuck in one apartment complex while there were 200 to 300 more people stuck in another part of the complex.

A resident of Kendriya Vihar Apartment said that a permanent solution to the problem was the need of the hour.

According to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru Development portfolio, said, the south, west and Mahadevapura zones faced more problems.

"The embankment of a lake gave way in Dasarahalli. Areas under Mahadevapura zone five layouts –Basava Samithi Layout, Tata Nagar, Bhadrappa Layout, Vayunandana Layout, Anjaneya Layout, Chitrakoot Apartment, Ramanashree California, Surabhi Layout, Someshwara Layout, Kanaka Nagar were inundated," Shivakumar said.

Twenty pumps have been installed to bale out water from the apartments and low-lying areas.

IMD predicted that light to moderate thundershowers accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places over Chikkaballapur, Chikkamagalur, Kolar, Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural districts.

Also, isolated heavy rain and thundershowers are likely to occur over Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dharwad, Gadag, Belagavi, Haveri, Davangere, Ballari, Mandya, Mysuru, Ramanagara and Chamarajanagar. *—ANI*

Emergency services personnel deploy boats to evacuate stranded apartment residents in Kendriya Vihar on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Clockwise from top left: Three people wade through a flooded street in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, on Tuesday; NDRF personnel rescue an elderly woman from Kendriya Vihar apartment, which is three feet underwater; Chaos on City roads as waterlogging, potholes cause traffic congestion on Ballari Road **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

PHOTO: X

HAL appoints Barenya Senapati as new director

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Barenya Senapati as its new Director (Finance). He joined HAL in 1995 and has a rich experience of 29 years. Senapati has served in varied roles at Divisional level and at Corporate Finance, the company said. Prior to his present appointment as the Director (Finance), Senapati was holding the position of Executive Director (Finance) at Corporate Office and handling all Finance and Accounts related functions of HAL, it said in a statement. According to HAL, Senapati played an active role in obtaining the Maharatna status for HAL, which is a historical milestone for the Company. He played a key role in finalisation of several contracts for supply of Fighter Aircraft and Helicopters, it said. "He is also instrumental in finalisation of the pricing of Repair and Overhaul activities carried out by HAL which constitutes a substantial revenue stream." *—PTI*

CBI moves top court against govt's denial to probe case against DKS

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Karnataka government's decision to withdraw its consent to the probe agency for investigating a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

The current Karnataka cabinet headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 23 November, 2023, held the previous BJP government's 2019 move to give consent to the CBI to investigate the DA case against Shivakumar was not in accordance with law and decided to withdraw the sanction as a result.

On 29 August, the Karnataka High Court held as "non-maintainable" a petition filed by the CBI and a BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal challenging the Congress government's decision to withdraw the consent.

DK Shivakumar was arrested by the ED in September 2019 **PHOTO: PTI**

Patil, however, challenged the high court order in the top court which sought responses from Shivakumar and the state government.

On 29 August, the High Court had dismissed the plea, which also challenged the state government's 26 December, 2023 order referring the Rs 74.93 crore DA case to the Lokayukta for investigation. The CBI had alleged that Shivakumar amassed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income between 2013 and 2018. He was a minister in the previous Congress government during this period.

The politician was arrested by the ED in September 2019 on the basis of alleged money-laundering charges stemming from an Income-Tax department investigation against him between 2017 and 2019.

He was released on bail in the ED case in October, 2019. *—PTI*

Woman falls victim to scam at B'luru airport lounge, loses ₹87K

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

A woman named Bhargavi Mani recently fell victim to a scam at Bengaluru International Airport while trying to access a lounge before her flight.

In a viral video, she claimed that a person identifying as a lounge staffer asked her to download the "lounge pass" app for a facial scan since she was not carrying her credit card. Although she never used the lounge, she later discovered that Rs 87,000 had been fraudulently charged to her credit card and transferred to a phonepe account. She realised the scammers had used the app to access her phone, redirect calls and intercept OTPs. She clarified that she did not blame the airport authorities, who have reached out to assist her.

She has reported the incident to the cybercrime department, notified her bank, and blocked her card. *—Salar News*

BJP moves EC, seeks Cong Ballari MP's disqualification

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

BJP on Tuesday approached Election Commission with a demand to disqualify Congress Ballari MP E Tukaram, alleging illegal money was used to influence voters in his constituency during the Lok Sabha polls, and he did not show the actual expenditure incurred in the election.

In a separate memorandum to the poll panel, Karnataka BJP delegation, led by its president Vijayendra Yediyurappa, also demanded action against Congress government in the State, alleging it violated the Model Code of Conduct by giving 'full page advertisements' to influence voters ahead of assembly bypolls on three seats.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Yediyurappa said BJP delegation demanded the election commission that Tukaram be disqualified as 'money siphoned off from the Karnataka Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited' was used to influence voters in his constituency during the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year. *—PTI*

E Tukaram **PHOTO: X**

Field Yogeeshwara from Channapatna: Nadda tells HDK

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday said BJP Chief JP Nadda has advised him to field saffron party leader CP Yogeeshwara on the JD(S) ticket for the Channapatna Assembly bypoll in the State.

"Three days ago BJP national president called me and said he will ask him (Yogeeshwara) to resign (from BJP) and join JD(S). He said he would give approval if he (Yogeeshwara) is fielded as the JD(S) candidate. What else the (BJP) national president can say?" he asked.

The Union Minister further said he told Nadda that the alliance is important and not the seat. "I want the NDA winning. He said he is ready to bow."

According to Kumaraswamy, Nadda opined that there should be a JD(S) candidate from Channapatna seat. "With such leaders I don't wish to spoil my relations, which you all should understand," Kumaraswamy told the party workers.

The by election in Channapatna is due on 13 November along with Sandur in Ballari and Shiggaon in Haveri district in the state. BJP has announced fielding

CP Yogeeshwara **PHOTO: X**

- The Union Minister further said he told Nadda that the alliance is important and not the seat. "I want the NDA winning."

Bangaru Hanumanthu from Sandur segment and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's son Bharath Bommai from Shiggaon assembly constituency.

However, the party has left to its ally JD(S) to decide on Channapatna candidate as the seat is considered to be a JD(S) bastion, for Kumaraswamy had won from here in 2023 Assembly election defeating Yogeeshwara.

The former chief minister wanted to field his son Nikhil Kumaraswamy, but Channapatna strongman Yogeeshwara's moves have made the JD(S) first family jittery. *—PTI*

CM, DKS to join Priyanka while filing nomination for Wayanad poll

MYSURU, 22 OCT

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will participate in Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's nomination in Kalpetta, Wayanad, as confirmed by a state government statement. The Congress party approved her candidacy on 15 October, following the Election Commission's announcement of the bypoll schedule. Rahul Gandhi expressed support for his sister, stating she would be an ideal representative for Wayanad, a region he holds dear. Priyanka also met with Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge for guidance ahead of her nomination.

The Wayanad bypoll follows Rahul Gandhi's decision to vacate the seat after winning from both Wayanad and Rae Bareli in the general elections earlier this year.

As Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra makes her electoral debut by filing her nomination for the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll on 23 October, the grand old party has decided not to place any restrictions on use of flags of itself or its allies.

In the roadshow to be held on Wednesday prior to Priyanka filing her nomination papers, there are no restrictions on the use of flags, a party source told PTI.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi said in a post on social media platform 'X' that the people of Wayanad hold a special place in his heart, and he cannot think of a better representative for them than his sister. *—PTI/ANI*

Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar with Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in Mysuru Airport on Tuesday **PHOTO: SALAR**

ANIMAL CRUELTY CLAIMED

PETA moves HC against Kambala in City

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

The Karnataka High Court, on 22 October, questioned whether conducting the Kambala event in Bengaluru would amount to cruelty to animals.

The court was hearing a plea by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) seeking to stay the bull race event scheduled for 26 October.

PETA's plea also seeks to prevent the state government from permitting such events outside Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, where Kambala is rooted in tradition.

Senior advocate Dhyan Chinnappa, representing PETA, argued before a division bench of Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind that these races can be held in Udupi district and Dakshina Kannada regions as per the Supreme Court order. He said that can be held where it is the "tradition and culture of that place" and not in the City where it would be a commercial spectacle.

He highlighted that transporting bulls over 300 kilometres from these regions would subject them to cruelty. Chinnappa said, "We cannot object to the sport being held in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi as it is culture of that area. It cannot be allowed to be held in other areas of the State."

The court deferred the matter to 23 October, with the State government to be represented by Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty.

PETA's plea also seeks enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and adherence to Supreme Court guidelines on future Kambala events across Karnataka.

It further seeks to declare a government order dated 21 November, 2023, granting permission notification, as a non-speaking order, ultra vires of and in derogation of the provisions of the 1960 Act and Supreme Court decision. *—Salar News with agencies*

Plea says that transporting bulls over 300 kilometres to Bengaluru subjects them to cruelty **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Hemant Soren will be J'khand CM: Tejashwi Yadav

RANCHI, 22 OCT

Amid an impasse over seat-sharing among INDIA bloc constituents for the Jharkhand assembly polls, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said a consensus has been reached over the party's share of seats, which would be announced soon. The remarks by the Leader of Opposition in the Bihar assembly came shortly after Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma alleged that Yadav has "no brand value" in the bloc, as he "failed" to get adequate seats for the upcoming polls, despite "visiting CM Hemant Soren's residence thrice". "INDIA bloc stands united and we will contest the elections together. Hemant Soren will be the Jharkhand CM again. A consensus has been reached on seat-sharing and RJD's seats will be announced shortly," said Yadav, who has been camping in the poll-bound state. He also alleged that the BJP destroyed Jharkhand, and accused it of being "anti-constitution and anti-reservation". *—PTI*

KTR files ₹100 cr defamation suit against Surekha

HYDERABAD, 22 OCT

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Tuesday said he has filed a Rs 100 crore defamation suit against Telangana Minister Konda Surekha for allegedly making "malicious and cheap" comments against him. In a social media post, Rama Rao said he was confident that the truth would prevail in courts. Rama Rao earlier filed a defamation case against Surekha in a city court over her comments alleging that he was the reason behind the divorce of actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya. BRS leader had sent a legal notice to Surekha, demanding an apology for her comments on 2 October, claiming that she made the defamatory statement with a malafide intent to harm his repu-tation and defame him, a punishable offence under the BNS. Telugu actor Nagarjuna has also filed a defamation case against Surekha for her comments. *—PTI*

Karni Sena offers ₹1,11,11,111 to kill Bishnoi: Sources

MAHARASHTRA, 22 OCT

Kshatriya Karni Sena has announced a reward of Rs 1,11,11,111 for any police officer who kills jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, whose gang recently claimed responsibility for the murder of NCP leader Baba Siddique in Mumbai. In a video statement, Raj Shekhawat, the Sena's national president, criticised both the Central and Gujarat governments for failing to curb Bishnoi's criminal activities. Shekhawat also accused Bishnoi of orchestrating the murder of former Karni Sena chief Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi, who was shot dead in Jaipur in December 2023. Bishnoi, implicated in multiple high-profile cases, including plots against Bollywood actor Salman Khan, his gang has remained active and is reportedly linked to several other violent incident. *—Salar News*

Manipur: Arms, ammunition seized in Kangpokpi

IMPHAL, 22 OCT

Arms and ammunition were seized in Manipur's Kangpokpi district, police said on Tuesday. The seizures were made during an area domination exercise in Aigejang in the hill district, they said. One each of .303 rifle, 9mm CMG with magazine, 9 mm pistol, SBBL along with two 51mm mortars, two hand grenades, five live ammunition, and two smoke grenades were seized, they added. *—PTI*

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and JMM leader Kalpana Soren welcome BJP leaders **PHOTO: PTI**

Jharkhand list leaves BJP feeling bitter

In a setback, several BJP leaders join JMM

RANCHI, 22 OCT

Discontent was brewing within the Opposition BJP in Jharkhand with several of its leaders, including an incumbent legislator and three former MLAs, switching sides ahead of the assembly polls, expressing their disappointment over the candidates' list of the party.

Among their grievances was BJP "ignoring" its own rank and file, and giving nominations to leaders who came from other parties ahead of the elections.

Polling for the 81-member assembly will be held on 13 November and 20 November, and the votes will be counted on 23 November.

"We are pained. If you see the list, the party has reposed faith in those who joined BJP from other parties, ignoring its own dedicated workers. Of the 66 candidates declared so far, more than half are those who came from other parties," a BJP leader said.

The turncoats who got a BJP nomination were former CM Champai Soren, his son Babulal Soren, Lobin Hembrom, Ganga Narayan, Manju Devi, Geeta Kora, Sita Soren and Ramchandra Chandravanshi, among others.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is the co-incharge for the assembly polls in Jharkhand, dismissed that there was any major discontentment within the party, maintaining that some resentment after the release of the candidates' list was natural as BJP was a big political party.

A slew of BJP leaders, including ex-MLAs Lois Marandi, Kunal Sarangi and Lakshman Tudu, joined the JMM on Monday. Last week, three-term BJP MLA Kedar Hazra and its ally AJSU Party's Umakant Rajak also switched to the ruling party.

Marandi, a former minister, said it was "painful" to part ways with BJP after serving it for 24 years.

Taking a dig at the Opposition party's candidates' list, the JMM said there were only 35 people from BJP on it. *—PTI*

MAHARASHTRA POLLS

Delay in seat quota sparks unease among MVA allies

Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat comes out of the residence of Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray after a meeting **PHOTO: PTI**

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

The delay in finalising a seat allocation agreement among the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections has ignited concerns among smaller constituents as the nomination process commenced on Tuesday.

As discussions on seat-sharing drag on among the MVA partners, minor parties within the opposition bloc, including the Samajwadi Party (SP), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Left parties, and the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), are growing increasingly restless.

Aspirants from various parties are flocking to MVA offices seeking tickets as the nomination filing process got underway—with a deadline of 29 October. The continued delays in seat allocation could potentially jeopardise their electoral prospects.

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said ruling Mahayuti has bigger problems than MVA.

"Congress will take seats on merits. The seats that can be won on merit should be contested by respective parties to save Maharashtra. ," he asserted.

Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat met NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray to break deadlock about seat-sharing. *—PTI*

Ruling parties doling out money: Oppn

PUNE, 22 OCT

The Income Tax department has started inquiry into the seizure of Rs 5 crore from an SUV on the out-skirts of the city, police said on Tuesday as Opposition alleged that the ruling parties were distributing money ahead of the Maharashtra elections.

With the code of conduct in force in the state for the November 20 assembly elections, Pune rural po-lice on Monday evening seized Rs 5 crore from a car near Khed-Shivapur toll plaza on the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway.

A man who was among the four persons travelling in the car claimed he was a contractor and the cash belonged to him, the SP said.

Talking to reporters on Tuesday, Raut also claimed that Rs 50 crore were being given to 150 MLAs of the ruling parties. *—PTI*

India announced agreement with China on patrolling in remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh **PHOTO: PTI**

China confirms pact to end LAC standoff

BEIJING, 22 OCT

China on Tuesday confirmed that it has reached an agreement with India to end the standoff between the two armies in eastern Ladakh.

"Over a recent period of time, China and India have kept close communication through diplomatic and military channels on issues related to the China-India border," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here.

Lin was asked for a response to Monday's Indian announcement about reaching an agreement to end the over four-year long military standoff.

Now, the two sides have reached a resolution on the "relevant matters," he said.

He added China will work with India to implement it but declined to provide details.

Pressed further to reveal more details, Lin said "I've answered that question and have nothing more to add".

There was no immediate reaction from the Chinese side after India on Monday announced it has reached an agreement with China on patrolling along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough in ending the over four-year-long military standoff between the two armies.

The confirmation from the Chinese side came only after President Xi Jinping left for the BRICS summit in Russia's Kazan on Tuesday.

Last month, both India and China had announced that the "front-line armies of the two countries have realised disengagement in four areas in the Western sector of the China-India border, including the Galwan Valley", the scene of violent clashes in June 2020 breaking over four decades of peace along LAC. *—PTI*

We are trying to restore the trust and both sides will have to reassure each other to achieve this

—Upendra Dwivedi, Army Chief Gen

In national security issues, it is not easy to come to any kind of a settlement. It's not easy, because there are views, there are perceptions, there are emotive issues

—Krishna Swaminathan, Navy Vice Chief Vice Admiral

Bihar: Kishor's Jan Suraaj names candidate for bypoll

PATNA, 22 OCT

Prashant Kishor-led Jan Suraaj Party on Tuesday named Sushil Kushwaha as its candidate for the byelec-tion to Ramgarh assembly seat in Bihar.

The announcement was made by Kishor at a press conference in Kaimur district.

Kushwaha, a former BSP leader, contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Buxar, a part of which is the Ramgarh assembly segment.

The bypoll was necessitated in Ramgarh following the election of RJD MLA Sudhakar Singh to the Lok Sabha.

Byelections will be held on four seats -- Ramgarh, Tarari, Belaganj, and Imamganj.

Jan Suraaj Party has already named former vice chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Krishna Singh, as its candidate for Tarari seat. *—PTI*

Punjab terror case: NIA chargesheets key aide

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted a key associate of Khalistani terrorists Rinda and Landa in a Punjab terror conspiracy case, the probe agency said on Tuesday.

The chargesheet against Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi of Punjab's Tarn Taran has been filed before an NIA special court in Mohali on Monday, according to an official statement.

NIA has identified the accused as an associate of foreign-based individual designated terrorists Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda and Lakhbir Singh alias Landa of the banned terrorist organisation, Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).

The accused was involved in the RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) attack on police station Sarhali in De-cember, 2022, as per NIA investigations, which have revealed that he had remained in contact with his foreign-based handlers from jail and even after his release from jail in that case, it said. *—PTI*

Charges against Assam's Akhil for anti-CAA stir

Guwahati, 22 Oct

A special NIA court on Tuesday framed charges against Assam MLA Akhil Gogoi and his three associ-ates under sections of the stringent UAPA and IPC for their alleged role in the anti-CAA agitation. On the other hand, charges were framed under Section 18 of the UAPA and 120B of the IPC against Dhaijya Konwar, Bittu Sonowal and Manash Konwar, he added. Reacting to it, Gogoi told PTI, "This again proves that we are with the people and this government wants us to be kept inside the jail."

Non-locals made to leave Valley: Mufti

SRINAGAR, 22 OCT

PDP president on Tuesday claimed that non-local workers were being asked to move out of the Valley in the wake of terror attack in Gagangir site, where seven were killed.

The former chief minister said the leaving of workers will create more difficulties and send a negative message to the country.

"After the barbaric attack at Sonamarg there are reports that the local admin is pressurising non local labourers to leave the valley immediately. While I understand their obvious sense of panic but asking them to leave in this manner is not a solution," she said in a post on X.

Authorities rubbished as "unfounded rumours" on her claims

Taking to X, Mehbooba Mufti asked Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to prevent any exodus of non-local labourers from the Valley.

However, police and civil administration dismissed the claim as "baseless" and urged the people not to pay heed to such false reports on social media.

Mehbooba Mufti said that workers leaving the area will create more difficulties and send a negative message to the country.

In a post on X, Kashmir Zone police said the claims about non-local labourers being moved out from the valley are false.

"Social media reports claiming the local administration has asked non-local workers to leave the valley are false.

The rumours regarding the administration forcing non-local workers to leave Kashmir are "baseless, holding no merit", an official said. *—PTI*

Mehbooba Mufti **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

- Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday after J&K terror attack said that workers leaving the area will create more difficulties and send a negative message to the country

Cong leader stabbed to death in Telangana

KARIMNAGAR, 22 OCT

A ruling Congress leader was stabbed to death by an unknown person in Jagtial district in Telangana on Tuesday morning, police said.

According to police, Maru Gangareddy, 56, who was travelling on a motorcycle was knocked down by a car at Jabitapur village in Jagtial district. "When he fell down, a person from the car got down and stabbed him to death."

The deceased is said to be a close associate of MLC Jeevan Reddy. *—PTI*

THROWS AT CHAIRPERSON

TMC's Kalyan breaks bottle at Wafq meet

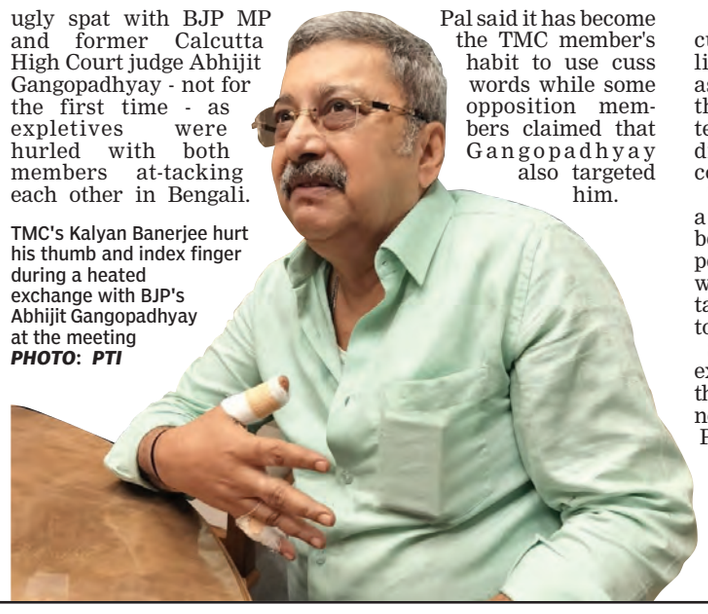
NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee was suspended for one day from the parliamentary committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill after high drama during its meeting on Tuesday where he smashed a glass water bot-tle and threw it towards the Chair while injuring his fingers.

The committee's chairperson and veteran BJP MP Jagdambika Pal condemned the conduct of Banerjee, a rather vocal parliamentarian who has been strident in his criticism of the Bill. He said such actions were "unprecedented" and crossed all limits.

As MPs enjoy privilege, does it mean someone will appear with a revolver tomorrow, Pal told report-ers, adding he had a narrow escape.

Banerjee was involved in an ugly spat with BJP MP and former Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay - not for the first time - as expletives were hurled with both members at-tacking each other in Bengali.



TMC's Kalyan Banerjee hurt his thumb and index finger during a heated exchange with BJP's Abhijit Gangopadhyay at the meeting **PHOTO: PTI**

Pal said it has become the TMC member's habit to use cuss words while some opposition members claimed that Gangopadhyay also targeted him.

Banerjee ended up with cuts on the thumb and the little finger in his right hand as a stunned Pal ad-journed the meeting. He was administered stitches at a medical dispensary in the parliament complex.

The committee later took up a motion moved by BJP member Nishikant Dubey to suspend Banerjee for one day, whenever the next meeting takes place, for his conduct towards the Chair.

Sources said Banerjee expressed regret for smashing the bottle and claimed that he never meant to throw it towards Pal, while still accusing him of "biased" behaviour.

Asked about the future course of action, Pal said he apprised Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla of devel-opment. *—PTI*

BJP men involved in Bahraich riots: Akhilesh

LUCKNOW, 22 OCT

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that BJP workers were involved in the recent communal violence in Bahraich and claimed this used to happen during the time of German dictator Hitler when rioters were given a "free hand" to commit violence.

Talking to reporters at the party's state headquarters here, he said, "If anyone did the work of rioting in Bahraich, it was BJP leaders who were involved in it. Their MLA is filing FIR against own party workers for conspiring to cause riots."

"A video is also going viral. I want to congratulate the journalist who mustered the courage to get in-formation from the hidden camera video that (during the violence in Maharajganj of Bahraich) the po-lice administration was not present on the spot for several hours and they (rioters) were given a free hand," the SP chief said.

"This is how Hitler used to work. Hitler used to send his party workers wearing police uniforms to the front. The police were removed and riots were allowed to happen," he claimed.

Yadav said the people of BJP are scared as they have no answer to inflation and unemployment. *—PTI*

Akhilesh Yadav **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

PHOTO: X

MHA extends exiled Bangladesh author Taslima's stay

NAGPUR, 22 OCT

Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday extended the residence permit of exiled Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen. MHA took action a day after Nasreen made a public appeal to Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to allow her to continue residing in India, as the extension of her residence permit had been pending since 22 July. A vocal critic of religious extremism and a champion for women's rights, Nasreen has been in exile since 1994 due to threats from Islamist fundamentalists in Bangladesh over her provocative writings. Nasreen has been living in exile for 30 years. She has lived in several countries, including Sweden, Germany, France, and the US. In 2004, she relocated to Kolkata but had to move to Delhi in 2007 due to an assassination attempt. *—PTI*

Girl falls into cooking pot in Nagpur, dies

NAGPUR, 22 OCT

A four-year-old girl died of severe burn wounds after she fell into a pot in which vegetables were being cooked in Maharashtra's Nagpur district, police said on Tuesday. The child succumbed to her injuries at a hospital on Monday morning, an official from Wathoda police station said. The incident occurred on 14 October when Trisha Balu Panbude, a resident of Shravan Nagar, was playing with other children, and she accidentally fell into a vessel in which vegetables were being cooked for a function in the neighbourhood, he said. Bystanders immediately pulled her out, but she had already sustained severe burns and was rushed to a hospital. *—PTI*

Fake court running for 5 yrs busted, 'judge' held

AHMEDABAD, 22 OCT

Police arrested a man after he allegedly set up a fake tribunal, posed as its judge and passed orders creating the ambience of a real court at his office in Gujarat's Gandhinagar, officials said. The accused, Morris Samuel Christian, passed an order in favour of his client in a case related to a government land way back in 2019, they said, indicating the bogus court was functioning at least for the last five years. A probe indicated Christian used to trap people whose cases of land disputes were pending before the city civil court. He used to take a specific amount from his clients as fees for solving their case, police said on Monday. Christian would first establish himself as a court-appointed official arbitrator, call his clients at his Gandhinagar-based office. *—PTI*

On HC direction, man salutes tricolour 21 times

BHOPAL, 22 OCT

Based on Madhya Pradesh High Court's direction, a man accused of raising a pro-Pakistan slogan, reached a police station here on Tuesday and saluted the national flag 21 times by raising 'Bharat Mata ki jai' slogan. The man, Faizan, was directed by the High Court last week to salute the tricolour and raise the 'Bharat Mata ki jai' slogan on every first and fourth Tuesday of the month at the Misrod police station here. Talking to PTI, Faizan said making reels and raising pro-Pakistan was a big mistake and he was regretting it. Faizan alias Faizal was arrested after a case was registered against him at the Misrod police station He was seen raising pro-Pakistan slogans in the video. *—PTI*

Ram Rahim to face trial for sacrilege, Punjab gives nod

The move comes days after SC vacated the stay imposed by HC

CHANDIGARH, 22 OCT

Punjab government granted sanction to prosecute jailed Dera Sacha Sauda Chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2015 sacrilege incidents that had triggered protests and left two agitators dead in police firing, official sources said on Tuesday.

The move came days after Supreme Court vacated the stay imposed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on the trial in three sacrilege cases.

The top court on 18 October passed the order on a plea of the Punjab government challenging the order of the High Court, which had stayed the trial in the three cases registered in Faridkot. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who holds the Home portfolio, approved the sanction on Monday, the sources said. The Chief of the Sirsa-headquartered sect is serving a 20-year sentence given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples. He and three others were also convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist more than 16 years ago. Singh, who is serving sentence in Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak district, was granted a 20-day parole on 2 October.

Ram Rahim is serving a 20-year sentence given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples *PHOTO: PTI*

The sacrilege incidents related to the theft of a 'bir' (copy) of the Guru Ganth Sahib from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala gurdwara, putting up handwritten sacrilegious posters in Bargari and Burj Jawahar Singh Wala and torn pages of the holy book found scattered at Bargari, had taken place in Faridkot in Punjab in 2015.

These incidents had led to anti-sacrilege protests in Faridkot. Punjab Police special investigation team (SIT) led by Additional Director General of Police SPS Parmar in 2022 had indicted the Dera Sacha Sauda Chief as one of the main conspirators in the three sacrilege incidents.

The High Court in March this year had stayed the trial against him in sacrilege cases after he challenged the validity of a 6 September, 2018 notification of the state government withdrawing the consent given to CBI to probe these cases and sought a direction to the central probe agency to investigate.

In 2015, the then SAD-BJP government had handed over the cases to CBI for probe.

Later, the previous Congress-led Punjab government, however, had handed over the probe to a special investigation team of the Punjab Police in September 2018 after the state Assembly passed a resolution withdrawing consent to the CBI to investigate these cases, noting lack of progress in the investigation. *—PTI*

RUSSIAN SUB IN KOCHI

An Indian Naval officer welcomes a Russian Naval officer as Russian Naval Submarine 'Ufa' arrives in Kochi. The Russian submarine will be docked at Kochi as part of a business call from the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet. This visit underscores the strong maritime cooperation between the two nations *PHOTO: PTI*

Muslim men can register more than 1 marriage: HC

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

A Muslim man can register more than one marriage as their personal laws permit multiple marriages, Bombay High Court held in a case of a man seeking to register his union with his third wife.

A division bench of Justices BP Colabawalla and Somasekhar Sundaresan on 15 October directed the deputy marriage registration office of the Thane Municipal Corporation to decide the application filed by a Muslim man in February last year seeking to register his third marriage with a woman from Algeria.

The couple, in their plea, sought direction to the authorities to issue them a marriage certificate, claiming that their application was rejected as this was the man's third marriage. The authorities refused to register the marriage on the ground that under the Maharashtra Regulation of Marriage Bureaus and Registration of Marriage Act, the definition of marriage contemplates only a single marriage and not multiple unions.

The High Court questioned as to why Maharashtra Regulation of Marriage Bureaus officials did not register the petitioners third marriage *PHOTO: PTI*

The bench, however, termed the authority's refusal as "wholly misconceived" and said in the entire scheme of the Act, it does not find anything that would preclude a Muslim man from registering a third marriage.

The bench said if it were to accept the authorities' contention, then it would effectively mean that the Maharashtra Regulation of Marriage Bureaus and Registration of Marriages Act overrides and/or has displaced the personal laws of Muslims.

It further noted that the same authorities had ironically registered the petitioner's marriage with his second wife. The authority had also claimed that the petitioner couple had not furnished certain documents. *—PTI*

Babita planned protest to be WFI prez, says Sakshi

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Olympic wrestler Sakshi Malik accused BJP leader Babita Phogat of initiating the wrestlers' protest against ex-MP Brij Bhushan Singh to replace him as Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) as president. Malik, in an interview, revealed that Phogat encouraged wrestlers to protest against Singh for sexual harassment.

Malik claimed that the protest wasn't solely driven by Phogat but her suggestion played a key role.

Malik refuted claims of Congress backing the protest, stating two BJP leaders, including Phogat, helped secure protest permission.

Whereas wrestler and Congress MLA Vinesh Phogat disagreed with Sakshi's claim that her and Bajrang Punia's decision to accept exemption from Asian Games trials undermined their protest against Singh.

PHOTO: PTI

Sakshi in her book 'Witness' said that this move made the protest seem "selfish."

However, Vinesh asserted that their fight remains strong.

The trio had accused Singh of sexual harassment, with the case still ongoing. Both Vinesh and Bajrang joined Congress before the Haryana elections, with Vinesh winning from Julana. *—PTI*

PREP FOR THE WORST

East coast braces for cyclone Dana's landfall today

Puri fishermen shift their boats ahead of Cyclone Dana *PHOTO: PTI*

BHUBANESWAR/ KOLKATA, 22 OCT

A well-marked low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a depression on Tuesday as it rolled towards the eastern coast with the likelihood of turning into a severe cyclonic storm named Dana, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

In its bulletin, IMD said the well-marked low-pressure area over the east-central Bay of Bengal moved west-northwestwards, concentrated into a depression and lay centred at 730 km southeast of Paradip in Odisha and 770 km south-southeast of Sagar island in West Bengal around 5.30 am.

The depression will further intensify into a cyclonic storm by 23 October and cross north Odisha and southern West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar in the early morning hours of 25 October as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph, gusting to 120 kmph, it said.

Advising fishermen not to venture into the sea from 23 to 25 October.

Schools in 12 Odisha districts will remain shut from 23 to 25 October and from 23 to 26 October in Kolkata. The storm is likely to bring very heavy rainfall in southern West Bengal districts on 24 and 25 October, the IMD said.

The weather system will bring heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy downpours at one or two places in the districts of South 24 Parganas, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur and Jhargram. *—PTI*

Veggie prices soars amid panic buying

The price of vegetables including potato and onion has increased in Odisha markets as consumers resorted to panic buying amid IMD's prediction of a cyclone hitting the Odisha coast, traders said on Tuesday. At Chhatra Bazaar in Cuttack, the price of potato increased from Rs 30 to Rs 50 per kg. The price of onion has also increased to Rs 60 per kg from Rs 40.

HARYANA FIRES 24 OFFICIALS OVER STUBBLE BURNING

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Haryana's Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Department has suspended 24 officials over alleged failure to take adequate steps to prevent stubble burning incidents in their respective areas.

An order in this regard was issued on 20 October.

An official said that more stubble burning cases were found in their areas.

The officials, who have been placed under suspension, include agriculture inspectors, supervisors and agriculture development officers from nine districts --Jind, Panipat, Hisar, Kaithal, Karnal, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, Sonipat and Ambala.

Supreme Court had pulled up the Punjab and Haryana governments over the non-prosecution of violators found guilty of stubble burning while summoning the state chief secretaries to appear before it on 23 October for an explanation.

Meanwhile. a thick layer of smog enveloped Delhi on Tuesday morning as the city's air quality deteriorated to the 'very poor' category with 27 monitoring stations falling in the red zone, the Central Pollution Control Board said.

The city's air quality index was recorded at 317. This deterioration led to prompting enforcement of Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan in the national capital, which enforces a ban on the use of coal and firewood, including tandoors in hotels, restaurants, and open eateries. *—PTI*

OXYGEN CYLINDER OF AILING WOMAN EXPLODES IN UP HOUSE KILLING 6

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

An oxygen cylinder kept to aid in the care of an ailing woman exploded in a house in Bulandshahr's Sikandrabad area, killing her and five members of her family, including her husband and her three-year-old granddaughter.

The tragedy that snuffed out the lives of 45-year-old Rukhsana, who had recently been discharged from hospital, her husband Riyazuddin, their three children and granddaughter took place on Monday night. Their two-storey home, which housed 19 members of the family, collapsed partially due to the blast. Those dead are Riyazuddin alias Raju, 50; his wife Rukhsana, 45; Salman, 16; Tamanna, 24; Hivja, 3; and Aas Mohammed, 26. "She had asked me to take her back home after two days," Tamanna's husband Rizwan said. "Now, I'm left with the pain of losing my mother-in-law, father-in-law, brothers-in-law, wife and daughter all at once," Rizwan said. Asif, who has lived next door for 18 years, said, "I heard a sound that felt like something had exploded. I ran outside and saw locals rushing to help. It was chaos, with people inside the house needing to be pulled out." Police officials said the iron beams of the roof of the house had to be pried open using gas cutters. An excavator was also used to clear the debris, he said. *—PTI*

Mukesh arrested for rape, gets bail

THRISSUR, 22 OCT

CPI(M) MLA and actor M Mukesh was arrested by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) a 2010 sexual assault case in the central Kerala district of Thrissur.

His lawyer confirmed that the MLA was arrested on Monday, his medical examination and potency test were carried out and then he was released as he had been granted anticipatory bail in the case by a sessions court on 24 September. Two cases have been registered against Mukesh, one by the Wadakkanchery police and the other by the Maradu police and in both he has got anticipatory bail. According to the police, the complainant in the case at Wadakkanchery is the same female actor on whose complaint a FIR has been lodged against him at Maradu police station.

SC extends interim protection to Siddique

Supreme Court extended the interim protection from arrest till further orders granted to Malayalam film actor Siddique in a rape case. The police said the actor was trying to the probe. *—PTI*

RESERVES VERDICT ON MADRASAS

Secularism means live, let live: SC

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Observing secularism means to "live and let live", Supreme Court on Tuesday said regulating madrasas was in the national interest as several hundred years of the nation's composite culture could not be wished away by creating silos for minorities.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said religious instructions are never an anathema in the country, "as it is available not just for the Muslims, but for Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, etc. and the country ought to be a melting pot of cultures, civilizations, and religions."

The observations came from a bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra during the day-long hearing on the pleas challenging the Allahabad High Court judgement, which declared the 2004 Uttar Pradesh law on madrasas as unconstitutional saying it was violative of the principle of secularism.

PHOTO: PTI

"The judgement is reserved," the bench said at the completion of the arguments.

At the outset, the Uttar Pradesh government, in response to a query of the bench, said it stands by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 and was of the view that the Allahabad High Court should not have held the entire law as unconstitutional. CJI asked the state government, "Is it not in our national interest that you regulate the madrasas?"

The bench said that secularism means to live and let live as senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the petitioner, contended that the judgment had the effect of depriving students of their education and hundreds of them cannot be forced out "which is against secularism".

The bench observed that striking down the entire Act would mean that the madrasas would remain unregulated. *—PTI*

JAWAN KILLS GIRLFRIEND, COVERS BODY WITH CEMENT

NAGPUR, 22 OCT

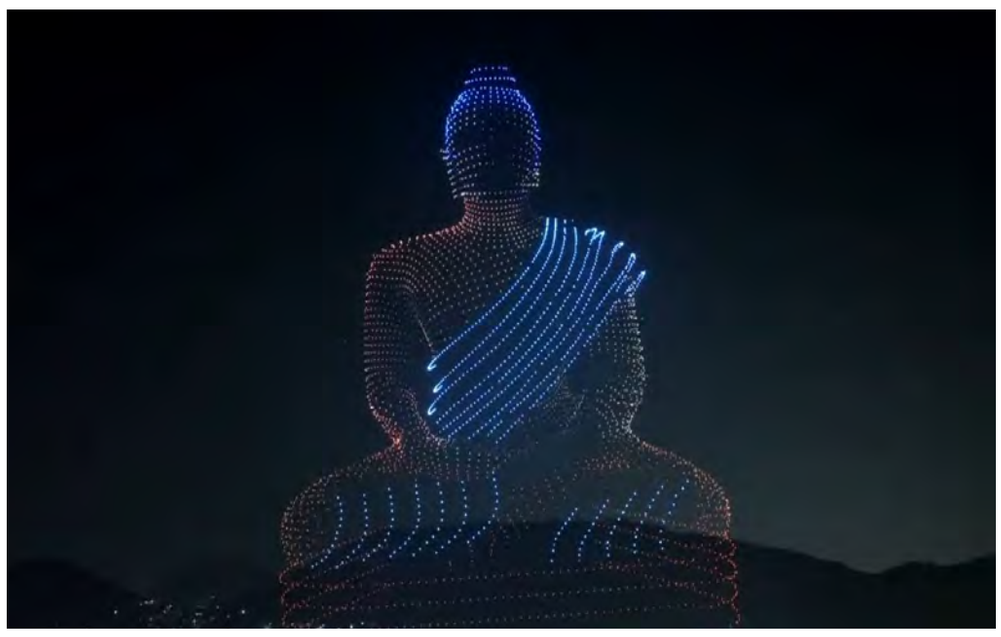
An Army jawan has been arrested by Nagpur Police for allegedly killing his girlfriend and covering her body with cement after burying her, a chilling crime that mirrors a plot from the film 'Drishyam', an official said on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old victim's disappearance on 28 August marked the beginning of the investigation that unearthed betrayal, deceit, and a horrifying crime.

The prima facie motive behind the crime is the romantic relationship turning sour due to opposition by the accused's family to their marriage, police said. The accused individual Ajay Wankhede, 33, is a resident of Kailash Nagar area in Nagpur who is stationed in Nagaland. *—PTI*

DRONES LIGHT UP SKIES IN AP

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday inaugurated a two-day drone summit in Vijayawada. The event on 22 and 23 October at Mangalagiri in Guntur will feature drone hackathons and exhibitions. As many as 1,711 delegates and 1,306 visitors are expected to attend. The southern state is also expected to ink two agreements with Quality Council of India and IIT Tirupati. The show with 5,500 drones was a visual delight. ***PHOTO: X***



Why is justice so elusive for rape victims in small towns?

Cops cremate the body of a 19-year-old Dalit woman who was gang-raped in 2020 in Hathras district ***PHOTO: PTI***

Minors, especially girls, are often targeted by sexual predators in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. In a small countryside town, DW met with the family of 6-year-old Masoom, who was raped in broad daylight by a 27-year-old man.

Her mother Fatima recalls the horrific day: "I was cooking, and her grandmother was washing dishes. We didn't hear a thing. My daughter was reading an Urdu lesson in the shop attached to the house, playing as she did every day. She came inside crying and told us a man had come and taken her pajamas off. She was bleeding from her private parts. We understood what had happened. He had threatened to kill her if she made any noise."

Now, Masoom is terrified of men, including her own father.

"My daughter is so innocent and smart, yet this happened to her. She was in the hospital for over two weeks. She's scared of her own father now. She refuses to sleep next to him," says Fatima. "She used to be so full of life and joy. That brightness has disappeared from her face since the incident. She hardly eats, and whatever little she does eat isn't making her strong. I don't want any other girl's life to be destroyed like hers," Sultana says.

Most rapes unreported

Masoom's story is not an isolated case. According to new UNICEF estimates, over 370 million girls and women who are alive today across the world have experienced rape or sexual assault before the age of 18. Her family's search for justice ended with the rapist sentenced to life in prison under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). But such outcomes are rare. In rural India, cases like Masoom's often don't even make headlines.

India recorded nearly 39,000 child rape cases in 2022, but those numbers only tell part of the story. For any reported rape, many more cases go unreported as the victims and their families are silenced by intimidation, caste dynamics, and a broken justice system. Additionally, only 3% of registered child rape cases ended in convictions in 2022.

Upper-caste dominates law

Behind these numbers are victims like Chandralekha, a 14-year-old Dalit girl. Her rapist, an upper-caste man, apparently counted on the system to shield him. Rights groups have long documented how upper-caste men use sexual violence as a weapon against Dalits, often without fear of punishment. Chandralekha's father, Manoj Kumar has been repeatedly threatened for trying to get justice for his daughter.

"I'm under a lot of pressure, but I won't give in. They've threatened to kill me. The rapist said to me, 'I'm upper caste, you're at the bottom.' He uses caste-related slurs. He said, 'You're lower caste, and we'll make sure you suffer,'" Manoj told DW. Law enforcement in India is often dominated by upper caste officers. A 2020 report found that police frequently ignore crimes against Dalit women. In Chandralekha's case, the police allegedly told her family to file a harassment complaint instead of a rape charge. This allowed the accused to secure bail and continue intimidating the family. And even if the case gets to trial, his punishment will likely be lenient.

Modi acknowledges

After the recent rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata sparked massive outrage, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India was "angry" over sexual assault.

"As a society, we must think seriously about the atrocities against our mothers, daughters and sisters," he said in a national address.

However, critics argue that his government's response has been largely performative. Allegations of sexual violence continue, even against members of his own party, while systemic issues —such as poor police investigations and institutional backing for perpetrators — remain unaddressed.

Systemic failure of justice

India's courts, especially in rural areas, are often riddled with inefficiencies, biases, and corruption. In Sarita's case, the 15-year-old was abducted and gang raped.

Despite the police finding her attackers, justice is painfully slow. Her brother Suresh, the family's sole breadwinner, has been repeatedly summoned by police over minor formalities.

"Every time they summon me, I have to go," he told DW "They say it'll take a year before any punishment. How can I support my family if I'm stuck dealing with this?"

These delays happen for a reason. According to defense lawyer Vaibhav Bhatnagar, rural courts are often overwhelmed. "There's only one session judge for all these cases, and families are pressured to compromise. That's why conviction rates are so low."

Stigma and silence

Perpetrators often avoid the shame of committing rape, with the stigma falling on the victims instead. Survivors like Chandralekha and her family are shunned by their communities and often forced into isolation.

"Our ration shop was shut down. We had to sell our livestock to fight this case," said Chandralekha's mother.

Activists fight back

Despite the overwhelming odds, grassroots activists are pushing back against rape culture. In towns across India, street plays focusing on sexual violence challenge deeply ingrained patriarchal beliefs. The performances confront audience with uncomfortable truths. "This is a man's world," one actor says during the play. "What can you do alone?" A woman's voice responds, "I will fight for my daughter, I will get her justice." These activists know the change won't happen overnight. But every little step, including every street performance, moves the country closer to breaking the silence on sexual violence.

— Courtesy, DW News

SALAR ساڈا

Fate of 70K Afghan refugees in US tied to upcoming polls

The Taliban, an ultra-conservative Islamic political group, retook control of Kabul a little more than three years ago, dashing many Afghans' hopes for a tolerant, democratic government.

As US troops withdrew from Afghanistan days after the Taliban's resurgence in 2021, hundreds of thousands of Afghans flocked to the Kabul airport, desperate to be evacuated. Among them were Afghans who worked for US military and NATO forces as interpreters and in other roles – in addition to other people who were afraid of the Taliban.

Chaotic and sometimes violent scenes of the poorly planned evacuation captured media attention for weeks, as the U.S. military airlifted nearly 1,24,000 people out of Afghanistan. Many of the Afghans who fled their country in 2021 went to Iran, Pakistan and other nearby countries. To offer a lifeline to the Afghans who came to the US, the Biden administration announced on 29 August, 2021, that evacuated Afghans could legally – but temporarily – stay in the US.

As a scholar of civil conflict and refugee migration, I have been following the Afghan evacuation and policy responses in Washington since 2021. While President Joe Biden renewed humanitarian parole for approximately 70,000 Afghans in 2023, these people remain in legal limbo, unable to fully move forward in their lives.

Understanding humanitarian parole

The US admitted Afghans into the country through what's called humanitarian parole, a federal program that the President can authorise to give protection to people in other countries facing extreme emergency circumstances.

Humanitarian parole must be renewed by a presidential administration every two years, unlike the U.S. refugee admission policy, which gives foreigners who face legitimate fears of returning home the right to get permanent residency in the US.

The Afghan parole program enabled people like Mina Bakhshi – a female rock climber who had no future under the Taliban because of her gender – to enter the US and attend college.

It also helped people like Qasim Rahimi, a journalist in Afghanistan, to flee to safety with his family and settle in Kansas City, Missouri. About one-third of the Afghan evacuees who came to the US settled in California, Virginia and Texas, while the rest settled in other states.

Yet humanitarian parole is not permanent solution

While these Afghan people can legally work and attend school in the US, they often face obstacles with getting stable work or even finding a home to rent because they are not permanent residents and do not have Social Security numbers.

A long history of parole in the US

Typically, the US government has used humanitarian parole to rescue people from conflicts in which US armed forces are involved, like Vietnam and Ukraine.

People who face serious danger because of conflict or other reasons can also enter the US by applying for and receiving refugee status, but it can take more than a year for it to be granted. Humanitarian parole lets the US government act quickly when it wants to help foreigners come to the country during an emergency.

What the Afghan Adjustment Act would do

While Biden issued temporary humanitarian parole to Afghans in 2021 and renewed it in 2023, only Congress has the power to pass an act that would ensure they can legally stay in the country permanently. Yet, a deadlocked Congress has failed to pass legislation to adjust the status of Afghans.

A proposed bipartisan bill in Congress called the Afghan Adjustment Act would allow Afghan parolees to apply for permanent legal status.

A coalition of refugee advocates and veterans organizations has championed the Afghan Adjustment Act.

Yet, a handful of Republican lawmakers, led by Sen. Chuck Grassley, have opposed the act on national security grounds. They say that vetting procedures for newcomers are not sufficient, which could lead to security risks. Some want a more targeted program that focuses only on Afghans who worked with US troops.

The election factor to play a major role

The fate of Afghan parolees will likely be determined by the results of the upcoming election. Should Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris win office, I believe she is likely to renew parole for Afghans for at least two more years, as Biden did in 2023. Congress may be more likely to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act after the election, since it is rare to pass major legislation during an election period.

What Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump might do about Afghans living temporarily in the US is an open question. During Trump's previous presidential term, his administration focused in part on curbing immigration.

This included slashing refugee admissions and making it harder to issue US visas to Afghans and Iraqis who worked with the US military. *—PTI*

The United States managed to evacuate nearly 1,24,000 people from Afghanistan ***PHOTO: UNICEF***

LETTERS Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Ukraine faces critical military recruitment and supply challenges

Soldiers complain of having to grind through for days on end under heavy fire without a pause because there is no one to relieve them ***PHOTO: X/@DEFENCEU***

More Ukrainian soldiers have deserted the army this year than ever since the onset of a war that analysts say has seen both sides make gains and report losses.

Prosecutions for desertion from Ukraine's army are thought to have hit at least 30,000 – quite possibly much more – already this year. This is several times the number in 2022, the year the war began when citizens and foreigners voluntarily poured into the military to push Russia back.

Those found guilty are given between five and 12 years in prison. However, some defectors say that is a better option than facing what might be an endless, undefined period on the battlefield.

Desertion has become so common that Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, took the unprecedented step of decriminalising first-time attempts to flee the army on 20 August, 2024, as long as those caught agree to return to duty.

Here's why analysts say more men are leaving the army and why it is not just a problem for Ukraine:

How many have deserted the Ukrainian army?

The numbers vary depending on who you ask.

According to the Kyiv Post, it is believed that about 60,000 people have been facing criminal charges for fleeing their posts since the war started. The Ukrainian daily cited documents from the prosecutor general, with almost half of those cases initiated this year.

However, British daily The Times also cited figures from the prosecutor general which, it said, showed some 51,000 criminal cases were initiated for desertion and abandonment of a military unit between January and September of this year. El Pais newspaper cited a closer figure of 45,543 desertions between January and August this year, which it said was data from the Prosecutor General's Office which had been leaked to the Ukrainian press.

It is unclear if those fleeing the army are mostly conscripts, or if some who earlier volunteered are also abandoning their posts. Volunteers who are not Ukrainian are allowed to withdraw from the army after six months of fighting.

Why are so many soldiers deserting?

Low morale caused by exhaustion is the main reason.

Soldiers complain of having to grind through for days on end under heavy fire without a pause because there is no one to relieve them. Those on the front lines have told the media that they have gone from battle to battle with little rest since Russia's invasion in 2022.

Troops are allowed to take 10 days off twice a year, but manpower shortages sometimes delay even those vacations. Soldiers and their families are pushing for breaks that range between a month's vacation and a three-year rotation.

One soldier placed under investigation for desertion – Serhii Hnezdilov, who is also a journalist – told The Times newspaper in the UK: "At least in prison you know when you will be able to leave." He was arrested after writing about his decision to leave the army on Facebook in protest against conditions in the army.

What condition is the army in?

It is not clear how many men Ukraine has lost in the war, but analysts say they might be in the tens of thousands. Western estimates put it at 80,000 soldiers.

Experts say the rising number of desertion cases comes as Ukraine faces a shortage of soldiers on the battlefield – a problem it is trying to solve by forcefully mobilising fighters.

As few as five to seven Ukrainian soldiers are having to face some 30 soldiers from the Russian side in some cases, Simon Schlegel, an analyst with the Crisis Group, told Radio Free Europe, a Prague-based publication.

Why is the army in such a poor state?

Ukrainian officials blame Western allies – the European Union and the US – for being too slow to provide military aid.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly urged Washington, with Congress split on the issue of allocating more aid to Ukraine, to speedily deliver promised funds to allow the country to buy more artillery shells and air defence systems.

On April 24 this year, the US passed a bill after a delay of almost a year, granting a $61bn aid package largely meant for Ukraine. Military aid deliveries to the country as part of the package included vehicles, Stinger air defence munitions, ammunition for high-mobility artillery rocket systems and antitank munitions.

In a statement on April 29, Zelenskyy thanked the US government and said the support had "started arriving" but reiterated a need for speedier help.

"The speed of deliveries means stabilising the front," Zelenskyy said.

Are conscription laws fuelling desertions?

Ukraine's martial law, which entered into force at the start of the war, mandates young men to join the military.

Zelenskyy's government says the army needs to enlist 500,000 out of about 3.7 million men of fighting age who are eligible for service.

Is there any way to avoid conscription?

Not officially. Martial law means those in the drafting age groups and categories are not allowed to leave the country.

However, hundreds of young men have fled to neighbouring countries fearing conscription. Some have risked the freezing waters of the Tysa River, on the border with Romania, to get away, and many have drowned, according to Ukraine's border patrol, which did not give specific numbers.

Those caught trying to leave the country are often fined and then released.

Is Russia facing the same problem?

Manpower and weaponry problems are also putting pressure on the Russian side, experts say. However, there are still more Russian soldiers than Ukrainian at the moment, and Russia has taken about 19 percent of Ukraine's territory since the war started.

"We have to keep this context in mind when we talk about Ukraine because we don't see what's happening on the other end – Russia has years and years of practice keeping its information about losses secret," Giles said. *—Al Jazeera*

Hezbollah fires rockets into central Israel

IDF said 5 projectiles were fired from Lebanon; Tel Aviv declares state of emergency

Rescue workers search for victims at the site of Israeli airstrikes that destroyed buildings facing the city's main government hospital in a densely-populated neighborhood, in southern Beirut, Lebanon on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

TEL AVIV, 22 OCT

Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets into central Israel on Tuesday, setting off air raid sirens in the country's most populated areas but causing no apparent damage or injuries.

The Israeli military said five projectiles were fired from Lebanon into Israel and said most were intercepted by Israel's missile defense system. One landed in an open area.

The rocket fire came as Israel stepped up its strikes in Lebanon, targeting a Hezbollah-run financial institution, and as the US pushed to resume cease-fire talks in Gaza following the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to annihilate Hamas and recover dozens of hostages held by the group. Hamas says it will only release the captives in return for a lasting cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

On 7 October, 2023, Hamas-led militants blew holes in Israel's security fence and stormed in, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250.

Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, who do not distinguish combatants from civilians. The war has destroyed large areas of Gaza and displaced about 90 per cent of its population of 2.3 million people. *—PTI*

$500M found in Hezbollah bunker: Israel

Israel has accused Hezbollah of allegedly hiding more than $500 million in gold and cash in a secret bunker beneath a Beirut hospital. Israel Defence Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari has claimed soldiers have discovered a money bunker located beneath the al-Sahel hospital in southern Beirut, as the IDF conducted airstrikes on branches linked to Hezbollah's financial institution. Hagari said: "The bunker was deliberately placed under a hospital, and it holds more than half a billion dollars in cash and gold."

—Courtesy, The Independent

Blinken in Israel to renew ceasefire efforts

TEL AVIV, 22 OCT

Antony Blinken **Photo: PTI**

Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel on Tuesday on his 11th visit to the region since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. The US hopes to revive ceasefire efforts after the killing of top Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, but so far all the warring parties appear to be digging in.

Israel is still at war with Hamas more than a year after the militant group's 7 Oct berattack, and with Hezbollah in Lebanon, where it launched a ground invasion earlier this month. Israel is also expected to strike Iran after its ballistic missile attack on 1 October.

Blinken landed just hours after Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets into central Israel, setting off air raid sirens in the country's most populated areas and its international airport, but causing no apparent damage or injuries. The Israeli military said it intercepted most of the five projectiles, with one landing in an open area.

Another 15 projectiles were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel at around the same time, the military said.

Blinken will also discuss planning for when the conflict ends and "the need to chart a new path forward that enables Palestinians to rebuild their lives," Miller added.

He said Blinken also would underscore the need for a dramatic increase in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza, something that Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin made clear in a letter to officials last week. *—PTI*

Peru's ex-prez gets 20 years in bribery case

LIMA, 22 OCT

Peru's former President Alejandro Toledo on Monday was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison in a case involving Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, which became synonymous with corruption across Latin America, where it paid millions of dollars in bribes to government officials and others. Authorities accused Toledo of accepting $35 million in bribes from Odebrecht in exchange for allowing a highway to be built in the South American country. The National Superior Court of Specialized Criminal Justice in the capital, Lima, imposed the sentence after years of legal wrangling, including a dispute over whether Toledo, who governed Peru from 2001 to 2006, could be extradited from the United States. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Harvey Weinstein diagnosed with bone cancer

LOS ANGELES, 22 OCT

Producer Harvey Weinstein, who became synonymous with Hollywood's 2018 #MeToo campaign, has been diagnosed with cancer. Weinstein has chronic myeloid leukaemia and is undergoing treatment while still in prison at Rikers Island in New York, reported NBC News. According to the Mayo Clinic, chronic myeloid leukaemia is an uncommon form of cancer of the bone marrow. The news of Weinstein's cancer diagnosis came after he underwent an emergency heart surgery last month, and tested positive for Covid and double pneumonia in July. Weinstein is currently lodged at Rikers Island as he awaits a retrial in November after his 2020 rape conviction in New York, and 23-year sentence, was overturned in April. He was also indicted on further sexual assault charges in New York last month. He has pleaded not guilty. *—PTI*

Shooting in Washington state leaves 5 dead

FALL CITY, 22 OCT

Law enforcement officials found five people killed in a shooting inside a home southeast of Seattle on Monday morning and took a teenager into custody, police said. Multiple people called 911 around 5 am to report a shooting in Fall City, Washington, King County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Mike Mellis said at a media briefing Monday afternoon. Arriving deputies immediately took one teen into custody while another teenager who had been hurt was taken to a Seattle hospital, Mellis said. Both teens live at the house, Mellis said. Deputies entering the home found the bodies of five people, he said. Two were adults and three were described by Mellis as young teenagers. No names have yet been released. *—PTI*

Germany reports first case of new Mpox variant

BERLIN, 22 OCT

Germany's disease control center said Tuesday that a new, more infectious variant of the Mpox virus has been detected in Germany for the first time. The Robert Koch Institute said the person was infected abroad but didn't give any further details, including on where the case was being treated. The institute said it "is monitoring the situation very closely and adjusting its recommendations if necessary". The first case of the Mpox virus variant outside the African continent was confirmed in Sweden in mid-August. A case was also reported in Thailand. The World Health Organisation has declared that the increasing spread of Mpox in Africa is a global health emergency. So far, the vast majority of cases have been reported in Congo. Outbreaks of mpox are currently affecting 18 out of 55 countries in Africa. *—PTI*

Chinese President Xi Jinping greets Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting at BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia PHOTO: PTI

Russia and China keep big neighbours together: Xi at BRICS

KAZAN, 22 OCT

Chinese President Xi Jinping said Tuesday that China and Russia have found the right way for neighboring major countries to get along with each other which features non-alliance, non-confrontation and not targeting any third party.

In his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Xi said China-Russia relations have come a long way, and made a series of pioneering achievements. Xi arrived in Kazan earlier in the day for the 16th BRICS Summit.

Jinping on Tuesday left for Russia to attend the BRICS summit where he is expected to meet leaders of the member countries, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines. Xi will articulate China's vision for "greater cooperation" of the BRICS bloc, which has now expanded to 10 members, and "open a new era for the Global South to seek strength through solidarity" at the three day summit.

The summit of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), which now has expanded with five additional members Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, is being held in the Russian city of Kazan, about 900 km east of Moscow, from October 22 to 24.

Xi left Beijing for the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. *—PTI with agencies*

'US can make Germany let Ukraine join NATO'

Ukraine's President is hoping allies will take a more positive stance on his so-called victory plan after the US election, but concedes that its key demand — an invitation to join NATO — is not welcome by some key Western partners, in particular Germany. Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia was also likely looking at the postelection scenario in the US to assess the possibility of cease-fire talks with Ukraine. He assessed that if partial cease-fire deals could be reached over attacks on energy infrastructure and Black Sea shipping routes, it would signal the end of the "hot phase" of the war. At least three people have been killed in an overnight Russian attack in Ukraine. *—PTI with agencies*

140 Rohingyas in Indonesia to face uncertain future

LABUHAN HAJI, 22 OCT

About 140 weak and hungry Rohingya Muslims, mostly women and children, were on a wooden boat anchored about 1 mile (0.60 km) off the coast of Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh on Tuesday, officials said, and local residents refused to allow them onto land.

The blue-painted boat has been floating off the coast since Friday. Three Rohingya died during the nearly two-week-long trip from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh to the waters off Labuhan Haji in South Aceh district, local police said.

Authorities have transferred 11 Rohingya to a government hospital since Sunday after their health worsened. "Our community, the fishing community, refuses to let them land because of what happened in other places. They have caused unrest to local residents," said Muhammad Jabal, the chief of the fishing community.

A large banner read: "The people of South Aceh Regency reject the arrival of Rohingya refugees in the South Aceh Regency area." *—PTI*

China holds live fire drills on island closest to Taiwan

TAIPEI, 22 OCT

China is holding live fire drills off the coast of its southern Fujian province facing Taiwan, just a week after a massive air-and-sea drills it called punishment for Taiwan's president rejecting Beijing's claims of sovereignty.

The live fire drills were being held near the Pingtan islands off Fujian province, according to a notice from the Maritime Safety Administration. It warned ships to avoid the area. It did not offer additional details.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said China's drills were part of an annual exercise and was tracking them. "It cannot be ruled out that it is one of the ways to expand the deterrent effect in line with the dynamics in the Taiwan Strait," the statement added.

Taiwan is a self-ruled island that Beijing claims is part of China. Tensions around the issue have flared in recent years. China has increased its presence in the waters and skies around Taiwan. It now increasingly sends large amounts of warplanes and navy vessels in military exercises near Taiwan and its coast guard carries out patrols.

Last week, China held a one-day military exercise aimed at practicing the "sealing off of key ports and key areas". Taiwan counted a record one-day total of 153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships.

Germany sent two warships through the Taiwan Strait last month as it seeks to increase its defence engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. China has also exerted diplomatic pressure on Taiwan, poaching its allies. South Africa, which does not recognise Taiwan as a country, asked the island last week to move its liaison office outside the capital, Pretoria, as a concession to China. Taiwan on Monday said it would fight the request. *—PTI*

The live fire drills were being held near the Pingtan islands off Fujian province **PHOTO: X@WILLRIPLEYCNN**

Indo-US Republicans slam Kamala

WASHINGTON, 22 OCT

Three Indian American Republican leaders -- Bobby Jindal, Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswamy -- have slammed Vice President Kamala Harris, who is running for president on the Democratic ticket, over her allegedly flawed immigration, economic and foreign policies.

Former Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal in a video, which is being run as an advertisement on social media, has claimed that Harris' Medicare plan will give 12 million illegal immigrants "gold-plated" healthcare. "It will flood the US with more illegal immigrants," Jindal said in a video released by America First Policy Institute, a political action committee. "Don't let your families and friends fall for the lies." Jindal, 53, was the Louisiana Governor from 2008 to 2016. In 2016 he unsuccessfully tried his luck in the Republican presidential race. After keeping a low profile and initially being on the other side of the Donald Trump campaign, Jindal is now back in action supporting former president Bobby Jindal on his policies. *—PTI*

Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at The People's Light in Malvern, Pa on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

McDonald's says it isn't endorsing Trump's candidacy

WASHINGTON, 22 OCT

McDonald's Corp. agreed to host former President Donald Trump at a Pennsylvania store over the weekend but said it isn't endorsing a candidate in the US presidential race.

Trump staffed the fry station at a McDonald's in suburban Philadelphia on Sunday before answering questions through the drive-thru window. The restaurant was closed to the public for the Republican nominee's visit.

McDonald's said the owner-operator of the location, Derek Giacomantonio reached out after he learned of Trump's desire to visit a Pennsylvania restaurant. McDonald's agreed to the event. *—PTI*

VERY UNHEALTHY

Lahore declared the most polluted city in world for 2nd time

The smog crisis has been fuelled by crop residue burning and industrial emissions **PHOTO: PHOTO: X**

LAHORE, 22 OCT

Pakistan's cultural city Lahore been declared the most polluted city in the world, with an alarming Air Quality Index (AQI) of 394, and the Pakistan's Punjab government has planned for artificial rain to mitigate smog impact.

The AQI is a measure of the concentration of various pollutants in the air. An AQI above 100 is considered unhealthy and above 150 "very unhealthy". The smog crisis has been fuelled by crop residue burning and industrial emissions.

The hazardous smog has led to widespread health issues among the city residents, including coughing, breathing difficulties, eye irritation, and skin infections. "Yesterday Lahore was declared the most polluted city in the world. We have taken a number of initiatives to address the matter and now we are planning for an artificial rain in the city," Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari told a press conference here on Tuesday.

The Punjab government of Maryam Nawaz has also launched the 'Anti-Smog Squad' which will visit smog-affected areas. Smog - the moniker for combination of smoke and fog - is a specific phenomenon that occurs when certain polluting microparticles mix with cold, moist air and hang close to the ground, reducing visibility and causing health issues.

- The AQI is a measure of the concentration of various pollutants in the air. An AQI above 100 is considered unhealthy and above 150 "very unhealthy"

These squads will educate farmers about the hazards of burning crop residues, promote the use of super seeders and offer alternative methods for residue disposal. She urged farmers to avoid burning the crop residues, stressing that doing so harms not just the crops but also their children's health.

Early this month, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had called for "climate diplomacy" with India to mitigate smog impact in the province. Both sides should undertake joint efforts to combat smog, she said, adding that stubble burning in India's Punjab impacts across the border because of air direction. "This issue needs to be taken up with India forthwith," she said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Silver zooms past ₹1L mark, gold hits record high

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

Gold price rose by Rs 350 to hit a fresh all-time high of Rs 81,000 per 10 grams while silver soared Rs 1,500 to record the Rs 1 lakh mark in the national capital on Tuesday amid a surge in demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Continuing its upward movement for the fifth straight day, silver bounced Rs 1,500 to hit a fresh high of Rs 1.01 lakh per kg against the previous close of Rs 99,500 per kg on Monday. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 350 to hit a fresh high of Rs 80,600 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, the metal of 99.5 per cent purity had finished at Rs 80,250 per 10 grams while gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 80,650 per 10 grams on Monday. Bullion traders attributed the jump in precious metal rates to the rising consumption in industrial and wearable segments in the domestic market. Globally, silver comex futures went up nearly 1 per cent to USD 34.41 per ounce. This week, the focus will be on International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings, preliminary manufacturing and services PMI from major economies, US durables goods orders and comments from Fed officials which will drive the bullion prices in the near future, Modi said. "The current momentum in silver prices is driven by industrial demand, such as in expanding photovoltaic applications, followed by the jewellery and silverware segments," Arun Misra, CEO and Whole-time Director at Hindustan Zinc Ltd, said. —*PTI*

Rupee settles flat at 84.07 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

The rupee settled flat at 84.07 (provisional) against the US dollar for the second straight session on Tuesday, tracking negative domestic equity markets and unabated outflow of foreign funds.

The local unit was also weighed down by elevated crude oil prices as well as firm American currency amid rising US treasury yields, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic unit opened at 84.07 against the greenback and witnessed a restricted movement between 84.06 and 84.08 during the session. The unit finally settled at the previous day's closing level of 84.07 (provisional) against the dollar. On Monday, the rupee settled flat at 84.07 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell marginally by 0.07 per cent to 103.76. —*PTI*

Groww CEO: IPO somewhere down the line soon

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Popular online trading platform Groww is looking at going public, its Co-founder and CEO Lalit Keshre hinted on Tuesday, but stopped short of giving a timeline. At the NDTV World Summit 2024 here in the national capital, Keshre said its IPO is "somewhere down the line". "May be in some time. Its somewhere down the line but we don't know when," he said at the conclave. Companies are increasingly going public or intending to go public in India, given country's booming IPO market and its economic growth prospects. Groww moved its headquarters to India from the US recently. "Groww is an Indian company. Customers are in India, management is in India, all operations are in India, so it did not kind of make sense to be outside India. There is no reason why we should not be in India." —*ANI*

Adani to acquire Birla's Orient Cement at ₹8,100 cr

Adani to achieve 100MT per annum; Birla revenue up 30%

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group on Tuesday said it will acquire CK Birla group firm Orient Cement at a valuation of Rs 8,100 crore, as part of its expansion drive.

With this acquisition Adani Cement will achieve a capacity of 100 MT (million tones) per annum by end of FY25 and a gain of 2 per cent in the overall market share in the country. Adani Cement has signed a binding agreement for the acquisition of Orient Cement Ltd (OCL) at an equity value of Rs. 8,100 crore.

As per that, its step down unit "Ambuja will acquire 46.8 per cent shares of OCL from its current promoters and certain public shareholders", according to a joint statement.

The acquisition will be fully funded through internal accruals, it added.

The latest acquisition will add 16.6 MTPA capacity to the growth-hungry Adani group firm, which operates through Ambuja Cements in the sector.

Besides, this deal will also help Adani group, which is aspiring to have 140 MTPA capacity by FY28, reduce the overall logistics costs for the cement business and improve market share. Commenting over the latest development Ambuja Cements Director Karan Adani said: "This timed acquisition marks another significant step forward in Ambuja Cements' accelerated growth journey, increasing cement capacity by ~30 MTPA within two years of Ambuja's acquisition."

By acquiring OCL, Ambuja is poised to reach 100 MTPA cement capacity in FY25, he added.

C K Birla, Chairman of Orient Cement and the CK Birla Group, said, "The CK Birla Group is continuously reallocating capital to sharpen its focus on consumer-centric, technology-driven and service-based businesses."

Adani Group entered into the cement sector in September 2022 after acquiring controlling stakes in Ambuja Cement from Swiss firm Holcim for cash proceeds of USD 6.4 billion (about Rs 51,000 crore). Ambuja Cements owns a 51 per cent stake in ACC Ltd.

The Indian cement market is led by Aditya Birla group firm UltraTech Cement Ltd, which has a consolidated capacity of 152.7 MTPA. —*PTI*

Adani Energy profit jumps to ₹777.e39 crore

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd on Tuesday posted a nearly 3-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 773.39 crore in the September quarter, mainly on the back of higher revenues. The consolidated net profit of the company stood at Rs 284.09 crore in the quarter ended on September 30, 2023, according to a regulatory filing.
Its total income surged to Rs 6,359.80 crore during the period under review against Rs 3,766.46 crore in the same quarter a year ago. On operational parameters, the company had a strong quarter, with an average system availability of over 99.7 per cent.

SENSEX PLUMMETS 930.55 PTS

Investors poorer by ₹9.19 lakh cr in a single day

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Investors' wealth eroded by a massive Rs 9.19 lakh crore on Tuesday as markets came under heavy sell-off with the BSE benchmark index Sensex falling 930.55 points.

Extending its previous day's decline, the BSE Sensex plummeted 930.55 points or 1.15 per cent to settle at 80,220.72. During the day, it tanked 1,001.74 points or 1.23 per cent to 80,149.53.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 9,19,374.52 crore to Rs 4,44,45,649.22 crore (USD 5.29 trillion).

From the 30 Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, Power Grid, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, NTPC, Bajaj Finance and Reliance were among the biggest laggards.

In contrast, ICICI Bank, Nestle and Infosys were the gainers from the pack.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,261.83 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 3.81 per cent and the midcap index slumped 2.52 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended lower. BSE Industrials tumbled 3.51 per cent, realty (3.29 per cent), metal (2.99 per cent), commodities (2.80 per cent), power (2.64 per cent), utilities (2.64 per cent), telecommunication (2.63 per cent) and consumer discretionary (2.54 per cent).

A total of 3,428 stocks declined while 559 advanced and 71 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- On the NSE, the stock made its debut at Rs 1,934, down 1.32 per cent. Later, in the trade shares of the firm tumbled 5.88 per cent to Rs 1,844.65

Paytm profit at ₹928.3 cr on gain from ticketing biz

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

One97 Communications, the parent of Paytm, on Tuesday posted a net profit of Rs 928.3 crore in the quarter ended September 2024, compared to Rs 290.5 crore loss it incurred a year ago, as an exceptional gain from sale of entertainment ticketing business to Zomato improved the fintech firm's Q2 scorecard.

The revenue from operations slumped 34.1 per cent year on year to Rs 1,659.5 crore during the just-concluded quarter.

For Q2FY25, Paytm reported a Profit after Tax (profit attributable to owners of parent) of Rs 928.3 crore. This included an exceptional gain of Rs 1,345 crore on account of sale of entertainment ticketing business, Paytm said in its earnings statement.

"The company believes that the continued focus on payments and distribution of financial services will drive sustained, profitable growth. The same is reflected in its growing revenue for payments business of Rs 981 crore, up 9 per cent QoQ, and revenue from financial services at Rs 376 crore, up 34 per cent QoQ," it said.

The company's indirect cost has come down by 17 per cent sequentially to Rs 1,080 crore due to reduction in employee costs (down 13 per cent QoQ), marketing expenses and absence of certain one-time expenses incurred in Q1 FY 2025. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

POST LARGEST IPO SHOW

Hyundai Motor India shares fall 6% in muted market debut

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Shares of Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, on Tuesday made a muted market debut and further fell by nearly 6 per cent against the issue price of Rs 1,960.

The stock listed at Rs 1,931, reflecting a decline of 1.47 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, the stock made some recovery and hit a high of Rs 1,968.80, up 0.44 per cent. But, it failed to carry the momentum and tanked 5.81 per cent to Rs 1,846.

On the NSE, the stock made its debut at Rs 1,934, down 1.32 per cent. Later, in the trade shares of the firm tumbled 5.88 per cent to Rs 1,844.65.

The company's market valuation stood at Rs 1,52,290.52 crore during morning trade.

In traded volume terms, 11.72 lakh shares of the firm were traded at the BSE and 177.84 lakh shares on the NSE.

In the equity market, the benchmark indices gave up early gains and were trading lower. The initial public offer of Hyundai Motor India Ltd got subscribed 2.37 times on the last day of the bidding on Thursday, helped by institutional buyers.

This was the largest IPO in the country, surpassing LIC's initial share sale of Rs 21,000 crore. —*PTI*

The stock listed at Rs 1,931, reflecting a decline of 1.47 per cent from the issue price on the BSE PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

ADB commits $241M loan for WB power distribution

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 241.3-million loan to improve electricity distribution in West Bengal in order to help enhance people's quality of life by ensuring reliable and sustainable power supply.

"This ADB programme is aligned with the government's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme, which aims to strengthen the operational efficiency of power distribution companies," ADB Principal Energy Specialist Roka Sanda said in a statement.

Reliable and sustainable electricity distribution and service is essential to West Bengal's growth and development, the statement said.

West Bengal Distribution System Strengthening Program will improve electricity distribution for 8.96 million consumers in seven districts in the state, it said.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members — 49 from the region. —*PTI*

- ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members — 49 from the region

PHOTO: PTI

Jindal Group to expand cement capacity with R2K cr investment

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Jindal Group on Tuesday announced commissioning of a cement grinding unit of 1.5 million tonnes per annum (MnTPA) in Odisha, as part of its Rs 2,200 crore expansion plan.

In a statement, the group said, "Its arm Jindal Panther Cement (JPC) has commissioned the first cement grinding unit with a capacity of 1.5 MTPA, reinforcing commitment to low-carbon cement production.

The facility will utilise about 1 MnTPA of blast furnace slag."

Slag is a by-product produced from steel manufacturing through blast furnace route.

JPC plans to scale up its production capacity at both Angul and Raigarh to 7 MnTPA from from 1 MnTPA at present, infusing an investment of Rs 2,160 crore, it said. The grinding unit is designed with low-carbon technologies and uses slag to produce cement. The facility will source slag from Jindal Steela and Power Ltd's (JSPL) steel plant located nearby in Angul. —*PTI*

Zomato posts ₹176 cr profit for Sept quarter

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Online food delivery firm Zomato Ltd on Tuesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 176 crore in second quarter ended on 30 September, 2024.

The board of the company, which had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 36 crore in the same quarter last fiscal, also approved the raising of Rs 8,500 crore through qualified institutional placement of equity shares, Zomato said.

Zomato's consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 4,799 crore. It was at Rs 2,848 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses were at Rs 4,783 crore in the quarter under review against Rs 3,039 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Notably, Zomato's proposed fund-raise comes at a time when rival Swiggy, in the food delivery duopoly space, is gearing up to go public with its IPO. —*PTI*

Illegal forex trading: RBI lists 13 more firms

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

Reserve Bank on Tuesday updated the 'Alert List' of unauthorised forex trading platforms by adding 13 more entities, including TDFX and Inefex, taking the total to 88.

The Alert List contains names of entities which are neither authorised to deal in forex under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) nor authorised to operate electronic trading platform (ETP) for forex transactions under the Electronic Trading Platforms (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2018.

Some entities in the list are Ranger Capital, TDFX, Inefex, YorkerFX, Growline, Think Markets, Smart Prop Trader, FundedNext, Weltrade, FreshForex, FX Road, DBG Markets, and Plusonetrade.

RBI said the Alert List also contains names of entities/platforms/websites which appear to be promoting unauthorised entities/ETPs, including through advertisements of such unauthorised entities or claiming to be providing training/advisory services.

This list is not exhaustive, it added. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- Alert List contains names of entities which are neither authorised to deal in forex under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, nor authorised to operate electronic platform

SPAM BLOCKERS IN

BSNL lauches 7 offers, no hikes in tariff

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) on Tuesday launched a slew of new offerings and initiatives - a lineup that ranges from spam blockers to automated SIM kiosks and direct-to-device services.

BSNL also introduced low latency 5G connectivity for mining operations in partnership with CDAC, leveraging Made in India equipment and BSNL's technological expertise.

The new services - 7 in all - were launched by Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

BSNL's spam-blocking solutions automatically filter out phishing attempts and malicious SMS and aim to create a safer communication environment for the telco's users.

Automated SIM kiosks allow users to purchase, upgrade, port or replace SIMs on a 24X7 basis leveraging UPI or QR-enabled payments with seamless KYC integration and multi-lingual access.

India's first direct-to-device connectivity solution converges satellite and terrestrial mobile networks to deliver "reliable connectivity", a release said adding the technology is particularly useful in emergency situations and isolated regions and can enable UPI payments in such areas.

The Minister said that BSNL will have 100,000 4G sites by mid-next year and graduate some sites to 5G by that period.

Meanwhile, BSNL ruled out an increase in tariffs in the near future.

"We can clearly say we are not going to increase our tariffs in the near future," Robert Ravi, Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), told reporters.

Today, BSNL's prime interest is to see that its consumers are happy and to win their confidence.

"We don't see any need for tariff hikes in the near future," he said. —*PTI*

New services were launched by Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia PHOTO: PTI

Data centre capacity in India more than 2,100 MW

NEW DELHI, 21 OCT

India's data centre capacity is expected to reach 2,000-2,100 megawatts (MW) by FY2027, with anticipated investments of Rs 50,000-55,000 crore fuelled by digital boom and data localisation efforts, according to credit rating agency Icra.

The current capacity stands at 950 MW, with major players like NTT Global Data Centers, CtrlS Data Centres, STT Global Data Centers, Sify Technologies and Nxtra Data controlling 85 per cent of the market (as of March 2024), Icra said in a statement.

Icra Vice President Anupama Reddy said the surge in data generation and the push for data localization are driving a transformative shift in India's data centre landscape.

Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) led demand, which is expected to increase multifold in the next 3-5 years, presents significant opportunities.

Mumbai remains the focal point for data centre development, contributing over 50 per cent of existing capacity due to its strategic advantages in connectivity and power reliability, and is expected to remain the key location. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Verreynne century puts South Africa in command

MIRPUR, 22 OCT

Kyle Verreynne's century helped South Africa tighten its grip on Bangladesh in the opening Test on Tuesday.Verreynne's 114, his second Test ton, pushed South Africa to 308 and a 202-run lead in the first innings. When bad light forced stumps on day two, Bangladesh was 101-3 and still needing 101 more runs to make South Africa bat a second time.Opener Mahmudul Hasan was 38 not out and Mushfiqur Rahim was 31 in an unbeaten 42-run stand for the fourth wicket.Verreynne shared two vital partnerships — 119 with Wiaan Mulder for the seventh wicket and 66 with Dane Piedt for the ninth. He was the last batter out after hitting eight fours and two sixes in his 144-ball knock. Mulder made 54 off 112 and Piedt scored 32 off 87.—*PTI*

PWR700 event to be held in Delhi from 24 October

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

Around 750 players -- both Pro and amateur -- are set to compete in theIndia Masters, a PWR700 event, at the DLTA Complex here from October 24, theorganizers announced on Tuesday.

It will be the firsttournament in India, a fully owned and operated event by Pickleball WorldRankings (PWR) following the successful launch of the PWR World Tour in July2024 in Dubai, UAE.The participantsinclude top international players such as Dustin Boyer (United States), PhucHuynh (United States), Roos Van Reek (Netherlands), Mitch Hargreaves(Australia), Emilia Schmidt (Australia), Pei Chuan Kao (Chinese Taipei), aswell as leading Indian players like Armaan Bhatia and Aditya Ruhela. They will compete fora prize pool of USD 50,000." —*PTI*

Warner willing to come out of retirement

SYDNEY, 22 OCT

Former Australia opener David Warner on Tuesday said he is willing to come out of retirement and play against India in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy if the home team needs him in the opening slot.The 37-year-old left-handed opener announced his retirement from the sport earlier this year following the home Test against Pakistan here.While the hosts had won the clash, Warner scored 34 and 57 in both innings, respectively."I'm always available, just got to pick up the phone. I'm always dead serious. —*PTI*

Atletico goes all out to woo fans with disabilities

MADRID 22 OCT

Atletico Madrid wants to attract a record number of spectators with disabilities to a Champions League match to raise awareness about inclusion and the need to promote better access to the sport for disabled fans in venues across Europe. Thousands of supporters with disabilities are expected at Atletico's game against Lille at Metropolitano Stadium on Wednesday when the club could break the record of 1,740 disabled fans set by Real Betis in a Spanish league game against Valladolid last year. Atletico and its partners in the initiative, including the groups AccessibAll, Integrated Dreams, and World Football Summit hope the feat will help launch a movement to improve access for disabled fans in sports venues."They proposed to us to do this type of match and automatically we said, 'Yes,'" Atletico chief operating officer Mayo told.—*PTI*

India women's football team in action PHOTO: PTI

SAFF SHOWDOWN

India eye top spot, B'desh face must win game

Blue Tigresses clinch their place in S/Fs

KATHMANDU, 22 OCT

With a semifinal spot already secured, India will look to reaffirm their dominance when they take on Bangladesh in their final Group A match of the SAFF Women's Championship here on Wednesday.

For Bangladesh, this is a do-or-die clash. A win would crown them group champions, while a defeat would see Pakistan advance to the semifinals, with a superior goal difference. Pakistan, also on four points, would join India in the semifinals if the Blue Tigresses triumph.

A draw would leave Bangladesh as group runners-up with four points, but they need a victory to top the group. The Blue Tigresses clinched their place in the semifinals with a commanding 5-2 victory over Pakistan but now their focus shifts to topping the group and avenging a painful memory of 2022.

In that edition, Bangladesh dealt a shocking blow to India by ending their unbeaten streak in the championship with a decisive 3-0 win in the group stage.

It marked the first time India had lost to their South Asian rivals in SAFF history, and the Blue Tigresses will be eager to set the record straight.

"We have both senior and young players and we are prepared to push for a win.

We have had productive training sessions, and I hope we can put what we have practiced into action." "As the captain, I aim to lead by example and support the team in every way. Bangladesh has some fast and youthful players, but I believe our mental strength gives us an edge, which will be crucial in tomorrow's game," added the 34-year-old from Manipur.

Head coach Santosh Kashyap has led the team through five days of training in Kathmandu, preparing for the challenges that lie ahead against Bangladesh.

He has carefully assessed all the potential threats posed by the opposition.

"Tomorrow's match will be challenging, as Bangladesh is a strong side with a foreign coach and has solid tactical plans.

Although we have already booked a spot in the semi-finals, we are taking it one game at a time, aiming to win every match. Match Kickoff: 5.15 pm IST. —*PTI*

We shouldn't send a team for CWG, says Gopichand

NEW DELHI, 22 OCT

The legendary Pullela Gopichand and Vimal Kumar on Tuesday slammed the decision to exclude sports such as badminton from the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games and urged the country to not send a team to the event as it is aimed at "stunting" India's progress.In a blow to India's medal prospects in the Commonwealth Games, key sports such as hockey, badminton, wrestling, cricket, table tennis, and shooting have been dropped from the 2026 edition by host city Glasgow, which unveiled a pruned roster of 10 disciplines to keep the event budget-friendly and free of "operational risks".But the roster has stunned the Indian sports fraternity with Gopichand and Vimal coming out with the strongest reactions."There is no need for CWG. In my opinion, they should do away with it. It is better to organize the Olympics and Asian Games than CWG. It is pathetic, I am disappointed. CWG is losing its charm, its relevance, so I feel strongly we shouldn't send out a team for CWG, it is not required," former India coach Vimal told PTI."Instead of CWG, it is important to look at ways to provide better facilities to athletes at the Olympics and Asian Games. CWG is not required. You have to put good physical sport in the program, if you take away all that then what's the point," he added. —*PTI*

Pullela Gopichand PHOTO: PTI

Australia is sending 400 athletes

Relieved that the 2026 Commonwealth Games will finally be taking place in Scotland after its own state Victoria's shock pull-out, Australia's governing body for Common wealth sport is planning to send "more than 400 athletes and officials" for participation in the heavily pruned multi-sport event.However, chiefs of various major sports in Australia, including those of hockey and squash.

Hockey's omission from CWG blow for India

LONDON, 22 OCT

In what may be a setback for the Indian contingent eyeing glory in forthcoming Commonwealth Games, wrestling, badminton, hockey, cricket and shooting among major sports have been excluded from 2026 Glasgow schedule.

Hockey's omission from the Games would be a significant blow for India. The men's team has won three silver and two bronze medals, while the women have also shone, clinching three medals, including a historic gold in the 2002 Games.

In badminton, India has racked up an impressive 31 medals—10 Gold, eight Silver, and 13 Bronze.

Notably, the nation was to enter the 2026 edition as defending champions in men's and women's singles, as well as men's doubles.

Shooting was a stronghold for India, with a staggering 135 medals to its name. The count included 63 gold, 44 silver, and 28 bronze.

The wrestling competition has yielded 114 medals for the nation, including 49 gold, 39 silver, and 26 bronzes.

After the cricket's reintroduction in 2022, the Indian women's team claimed a Silver.

Para-athletes have been a part of the Games since the 2002 Manchester edition and will continue to be there in the 2026 edition as well.

"Para sport will once again be fully integrated as a key priority and point of difference for the Games, with six Para sports included on the sport programme," CGF said.

The CGF said that the Games will deliver over 100 million pounds of "inward investment into the city" and is expected to add an economic value of over 150 million pounds for the region.

The Australian state of Victoria was the original host of the 2026 edition but pulled out last year due to rising costs. Scotland then stepped in to save the Games. —*PTI*

PP Open: Sofia Kenin advances to 2nd round

TOKYO, 22 OCT

Former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin has extended her perfect record against Wang Xinyu, beating the 10th-seeded Chinese player 6-1, 6-4 in a first-round match at the Pan Pacific Open on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old American, who won the Australian Open in 2020 and was a French Open finalist the same year, won her fourth straight match over Wang. Her previous victories over Wang were twice at Wimbledon — in 2021 and 2023 — and at Auckland, New Zealand last year.

Kenin beat Garbiñe Muguruza in the Melbourne Park Grand Slam singles final in 2020 and lost to Iga Swiatek in the French Open final a few months later.

After her Australian Open win, she achieved her highest ranking of No. 4, but a series of injuries over the past several years has seen her ranking slip to her current No. 155. She also had to withdraw from the 2021 US Open due to COVID-19. Kenin was joined in the second round by Canadians Bianca Andreescu, who beat Serena Williams for the US Open title in 2019. —*PTI*

Sofia Kenin

WOMEN'S INDIAN OPEN 2024

Golfers Diksha Dagar, Tvesa Malik, Hitaashee Bakshi (India), Chiara Tamburlini (Switzerland), Manon De Roey (Belgium) and Alice Hewson (England) pose with the Hero Women's Indian Open 2024 trophy, at the DLF Golf and Country Club, in Gurugram, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Diksha Dagar wins Hero Shot Skills Challenge

GURUGRAM, 22 OCT

Two-time Olympian Diksha Dagar won the Hero Shot skills challenge in Gurugram on Tuesday, beating seven challengers who will line up for the Women's Indian Open.

Dagar came through the quarterfinals in second place with 175 points behind England's Alice Hewson, who scored an impressive 300 points in the challenge that needed participants to put the ball as close to the pin on the 18th hole with three scoring circles around the flag hitting from 80 yards out.

Spain's Nuria Iturrioz, with 165 points, and Tvesa Malik were the two others to enter the semifinals at the expense of Hitaashee Bakshi and another past winner, Caroline Hedwall of Sweden. —*PTI*

Messi mania helps drive record growth for MLS

NEW YORK, 22 OCT

Boosted by the Messi Effect, Major League Soccer hit record attendance marks and saw expanded sponsorship revenue this season.

With the conclusion of the regular season, MLS on Tuesday reported a 5% increase in attendance over last year with a league-wide total of 11.45 million.

That's a 14% increase over 2022. Two matches exceeded 70,000 fans and five matches exceeded 50,000. In an April match at Arrowhead Stadium, there were 72,610 on hand to watch Lionel Messi and Inter Miami play Sporting Kansas City.

The average was a league-record 23,234 per match. Ten teams set or exceeded attendance records and there were a record 213 sellouts. Even if Messi's road matches were excluded, the average attendance figures would still be an MLS best.

MLS is expecting that close to 12 million fans will attend this season's games through the playoffs, which start this week.There's no doubt the league's superstar attraction is Messi, the clear front-runner for the league's MVP award this season.

The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner has 20 goals and 10 assists in just 19 matches this season.Inter Miami won the Supporters Shield for having the best record in the regular season with 74 points, one more than New England when it set the record in 2021.

"He's helped put us in front of a global audience, and he's piqued the interest of sports fans in our country," said Chris, head of the club performance and optimization group at MLS."Our clubs have done an unbelievable job of taking advantage of that and understanding that players don't play forever. —*PTI*

Lionel Messi

Ranji Trophy: Shaw left out of Mumbai

MUMBAI, 22 OCT

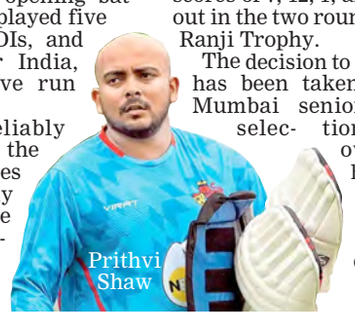
Top-order batter Prithvi Shaw has been left out of the Mumbai squad for their next Ranji Trophy match against Tripura owing to fitness and disciplinary issues.

The match is scheduled to be played in Agartala from 26 to 29 October.The right-handed opening batter, who has played five Tests, six ODIs, and one T20I for India, seems to have run into trouble.

It is reliably learned that the 24-year-old does not regularly attend the team's training sessions and has also appeared a "little overweight". "You have to look at his fitness and his running when he is on the field. The MCA has a rich history and there cannot be exceptions for a certain player," an official from the Mumbai Cricket Association told PTI.

Shaw's form has been a concern given that he has scores of 7, 12, 1, and 39 not out in the two rounds of the Ranji Trophy.

The decision to drop him has been taken by the Mumbai senior men's selection panel owing to his fitness and "general conduct". —*PTI*



Prithvi Shaw

Karnataka wins National Para Swimming C'ships

BENGALURU, 22 OCT

Karnataka secured the overall title with an impressive 392 points at the 24th National Para-Swimming Championships which concluded here on Tuesday. The event witnessed the participation of 518 swimmers from 28 states, with 360 men and 158 women competing across various categories. Remarkably, 231 of the participants were first-time competitors.

In the individual categories, Mohammed Aasim of Kerala emerged as the men's senior champion, showcasing his exceptional skills in the pool. Ravi Karthik of Andhra Pradesh won the men's junior title. —*PTI*

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ELITE

Neymar is back after a year

AL AIN, 22 OCT

Neymar returned to action after a year out through injury and helped Al-Hilal beat Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates 5-4 in the group stage of the AFC Champions League Elite.

Neymar signed for the Saudi Arabia club in August 2023 but played only five times before tearing an anterior cruciate ligament last October. He came off the bench 369 days later for the four-time Asian champion with 13 minutes remaining at Al Ain. He almost scored immediately when his low shot from the left of the area shaved the post.

In a thrilling match between Al-Hilal and the defending champion, Renan Lodi gave Al-Hilal the opener after 26 minutes. Soufiane Rahimi, the tournament's top scorer last season, leveled soon after.

By the break, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Salem Al-Dawsari put Hilal 3-1 ahead.

Mateo Sanabria pulled a goal back just after the hour but Al-Dawsari scored twice more to complete a hat trick, and Rahimi achieved the same feat to make it 5-4.

The win maintained Al-Hilal's perfect record in Asia after three games.

Elsewhere, Saudi Arabia's Al-Ahli won at Qatar's Al-Rayyan 2-1 thanks to goals from Gabri Veiga and Firas Al-Buraikan.

Iraq's Al-Shorta drew with Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor 0-0, and Qatar's Al-Sadd defeated Iran's Persepolis 1-0.

Al-Nassr and Cristiano Ronaldo are in action on Tuesday against Esteghlal of Iran. The game was moved from Tehran to Dubai due to the security situation in Iran. —*PTI*

Neymar

Mentality alone is not enough to survive: Sahin

LONDON, 22 OCT

Borussia Dortmund will need more than just a strong mindset when it visits champions Real Madrid in the Champions League on Tuesday, coach Nuri Sahin said as last year's two finalists meet again in the competition's new league phase.

Real won its 15th European Cup in June at Wembley with Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Jr. scoring late to claim a 2-0 victory over a Dortmund team who had threatened an upset win after dominating the first hour."Mentality only is not enough to survive against Real Madrid, especially in this stadium, against the champions of this competition," Sahin told a press conference on Monday."We need everything tomorrow.

We need a lot of quality, a lot of self-confidence, mentality of course, and also, as we say in Germany, game luck. —*PTI*

Nuri Sahin